







Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024



JEAN VALJEAN'S TERRIBLE TEMPTATION

Hugo, vol. ii, Les Misérables

THE VALJEAN EDITION OF THE
NOVELS OF VICTOR HUGO

Les Misérables

VOLUME II

BY
VICTOR HUGO

ILLUSTRATED



P. F. COLLIER & SON
NEW YORK

CONTENTS

VOLUME II

COSETTE

(Continued)

BOOK VII

A Parenthesis	521
-------------------------	-----

BOOK VIII

Cemeteries Take What is Given Them	535
--	-----

MARIUS

BOOK I

Paris Atomized	586
--------------------------	-----

BOOK II

The Grand Bourgeois	607
-------------------------------	-----

BOOK III

The Grandfather and the Grandson	618
--	-----

BOOK IV

The Friends of the A B C	656
------------------------------------	-----

BOOK V

The Excellence of Misfortune	689
--	-----

BOOK VI

The Conjunction of Two Stars	710
--	-----

BOOK VII

Patron-Minette	729
--------------------------	-----

BOOK VIII

The Noxious Poor	738
----------------------------	-----

Hugo—Vol. 2—1

SAINT DENIS

BOOK I

A Few Pages of History.....	833
-----------------------------	-----

BOOK II

Eponine.....	871
--------------	-----

BOOK III

The House in the Rue Plumet.....	890
----------------------------------	-----

BOOK IV

Aid from Below May be Aid from Above.....	928
---	-----

BOOK V

The End of Which is Unlike the Beginning.....	938
---	-----

BOOK VI

Little Gavroche.....	955
----------------------	-----

LES MISERABLES

COSETTE

(CONTINUED)

BOOK SEVENTH—A PARENTHESIS

I

THE CONVENT AS AN ABSTRACT IDEA

THIS book is a drama, the first character of which is the infinite. Man is the second.

This being the case, when a convent was found on our path, we were compelled to penetrate it. Why so? Because the convent, which is common to the east as well as to the west, to ancient as well as to modern times, to paganism as well as to Buddhism, to Mohammedanism as well as to Christianity, is one of the optical appliances turned by man upon the infinite.

This is not the place for the development at length of certain ideas; however, while rigidly maintaining our reservations, our limits of expression, and even our impulses of indignation; whenever we meet with the infinite in man, whether well or ill understood, we are seized with an involuntary feeling of respect. There are in the synagogue, in the mosque, a hideous side that we detest, and in the pagoda and in the wigwam a sublime aspect that we adore. What a subject of meditation for the mind, and what a limitless source of reverie is this reflection of God upon the human wall!

II

THE CONVENT AS A HISTORICAL FACT

IN the light of history, reason, and truth, monastic life stands condemned. Monasteries, when numerous in a country, are knots in the circulation, encumbrances, centres of indolence, where there should be centres of industry. Monastic communities are to the great social community what the ivy is to the oak, the wart to the human body.

Their prosperity and fatness are the impoverishment of the country. The monastic system, useful as it is in the dawn of civilization, in effecting the abatement of brutality by the development of the spiritual, is injurious in the manhood of nations. Especially when it relaxes and enters upon its period of disorganization, the period in which we now see it, does it become baneful, for every reason that made it salutary in its period of purity.

These withdrawals into convents and monasteries have had their day. Cloisters, although beneficial in the first training of modern civilization, cramped its growth, and are injurious to its development. Regarded as an institution, and as a method of culture for man, monasteries, good in the tenth century, were open to discussion in the fifteenth, and are detestable in the nineteenth. The leprosy of monasticism has gnawed, almost to a skeleton, two admirable nations, Italy and Spain, one the light and the other the glory of Europe for centuries; and, in our time, the cure of these two illustrious peoples is beginning, thanks only to the sound and vigorous hygiene of 1789.

The convent, the old-style convent, especially such as it appeared on the threshold of this century, in Italy, Austria, and Spain, is one of the gloomiest concretions of the Middle Ages. The cloister, as there beheld, was the intersecting point of multiplied horrors. The Catholic cloister, properly so called, is filled with the black effulgence of death.

The Spanish convent is dismal above all the rest. There rise in the obscurity, beneath vaults filled with mist, beneath domes dim with thick shadow, massive babel-like altars, lofty as cathedrals; there hang by chains, in the deep gloom, immense white emblems of the crucifixion; there are extended, naked on the ebon wood, huge ivory images of Christ—more than bloody, bleeding—hideous and magnificent, their bones protruding from the elbows, their knee-pans disclosing the strained integuments, their wounds revealing the raw flesh, crowned with thorns of silver, nailed with nails of gold, with drops of blood in rubies on their brows and tears of diamonds in their eyes. The diamonds and the rubies seem real moisture; and down below there in the shadow make veiled ones weep, whose loins are scratched and torn with hair-cloth, and

scourges set thick with iron points, whose breasts are bruised with wicker pads, and whose knees are lacerated by the continual attitude of prayer; women who deem themselves wives; spectres that fancy themselves seraphim. Do these women think? No. Have they a will? No. Do they love? No. Do they live? No. Their nerves have become bone; their bones have become rock. Their veil is the enwoven night. Their breath beneath that veil is like some indescribable, tragic respiration of death itself. The abbess, a phantom, sanctifies and terrifies them. The immaculate is there, austere to behold. Such are the old convents of Spain—dens of terrible devotion, lairs inhabited by virgins, wild and savage places.

Catholic Spain was more Roman than Rome herself. The Spanish convent was the model of the Catholic convent. The air was redolent of the east. The archbishop, as officiating kishlar aga of heaven, locked in and zealously watched this seraglio of souls set apart for God. The nun was the odalisque, the priest was the eunuch. The fervently devout were in their dreams the chosen ones and were possessed of Christ. At night the lovely naked youth descended from the cross and became the rapture of the cell. Lofty walls guarded from all the distractions of real life the mystic sultana who had the Crucified for sultan. A single glance without was an act of perfidy. The *in pace* took the place of the leather sack. What they threw into the sea in the east they threw into the earth in the west. On either side poor women wrung their hands; the waves to those—to these the pit; there the drowned and here the buried alive. Monstrous parallelism!

In our day the champions of the past, unable to deny these things, have adopted the alternative of smiling at them. It has become the fashion, a convenient and a strange one, to suppress the revelations of history, to invalidate the comments of philosophy and to draw the pen across all unpleasant facts and all gloomy inquiries. "Topics for declamation," throw in the skilful; "declamation," echo the silly. Jean Jacques a declaimer; Diderot a declaimer; Voltaire on Calas, Labarre and Sirven a declaimer! I forget who it is who has lately made out Tacitus, too, a declaimer, Nero a victim, and "that poor Holofernes" a man really to be pitied.

Facts, however, are stubborn and hard to baffle. The author of this book has seen with his own eyes about twenty miles from Brussels a specimen of the Middle Ages within everybody's reach at the Abbey of Villars—the orifices of the secret dungeons in the middle of the meadow which was once the courtyard of the cloister, and on the banks of the Dyle four stone cells half under ground and half under water. These were *in pace*. Each of these dungeons has a remnant of an iron wicket, a closet and a barred skylight, which on the outside is two feet above the surface of the river, and from the inside is six feet above the ground. Four feet in depth of the river flows along the outer face of the wall; the ground near by is constantly wet. This saturated soil was the only bed of the *in pace* occupant. In one of these dungeons there remains the stump of an iron collar fixed in the wall; in another may be seen a kind of square box, formed of four slabs of granite, too short for a human being to lie down in, too low to stand in erect. Now, in this was placed a creature like ourselves, and then a lid of stone was closed above her head. There it is. You can see it; you can touch it. These *in pace*; these dungeons; these iron hinges; these metal collars; this lofty skylight, on a level with which the river runs; this box of stone, covered by its lid of granite, like a sepulchre, with this difference, that it shut in the living and not the dead; this soil of mud, this cesspool; these oozing walls. Oh! what declaimers!

III

UPON WHAT CONDITIONS WE CAN RESPECT THE PAST

MONASTICISM, such as it was in Spain, and such as it is in Thibet, is for civilization a kind of consumption. It stops life short. It, in one word, depopulates. Monastic incarceration is castration. In Europe it has been a scourge. Add to that the violence so often done to conscience; the ecclesiastical calling so frequently compulsory; the feudal system leaning on the cloister; primogeniture emptying into the monastery the surplus of the family; the ferocious cruelties which we have just described; the *in pace*; mouths closed, brains walled up, so

many hapless intellects incarcerated in the dungeon of eternal vows; the assumption of the gown, the burial of souls alive. Add these individual torments to the natural degradation, and, whoever you may be, you will find yourself shuddering at the sight of the frock and the veil, those two winding-sheets of human invention.

However, on certain points and in certain places, in spite of philosophy and in spite of progress, the monastic spirit perseveres in the full blaze of the nineteenth century, and a singular revival of asceticism, at this very moment, amazes the civilized world. The persistence of superannuated institutions in striving to perpetuate themselves is like the obstinacy of a rancid odor clinging to the hair; the pretension of spoiled fish that insists on being eaten; the tenacious folly of a child's garment trying to clothe a man, or the tenderness of a corpse returning to embrace the living.

"Ingrates!" exclaims the garment. "I shielded you in weakness. Why do you reject me now?" "I come from the depths of the sea," says the fish. "I was once a rose," cries the odor. "I loved you," murmurs the corpse. "I civilized you," says the convent.

To this there is but one reply: "In the past."

To dream of the indefinite prolongation of things dead and the government of mankind by embalming; to restore dilapidated dogmas, regild the shrines, replaster the cloisters, reconsecrate the reliquaries, revamp old superstitions, replenish fading fanaticism, put new handles in worn-out sprinkling brushes, reconstitute monasticism; to believe in the salvation of society by the multiplication of parasites; to foist the past upon the present, all this seems strange. There are, however, advocates for such theories as these. These theorists, men of mind, too, in other things, have a very simple process; they apply to the past a coating of what they term Divine right, respect for our forefathers, time-honored authority, sacred tradition, legitimacy; and they go about shouting: "Here! take this, good people!" This kind of logic was familiar to the ancients; their soothsayers practiced it. Rubbing over a black heifer with chalk, they would exclaim: "She is white." *Bos cretatus*.

As for ourselves, we distribute our respects here and

there, and spare the past entirely, providing it will but consent to be dead. But, if it insist upon being alive, we attack it and endeavor to kill it.

Superstitions, bigotries, hypocrisies, prejudices, these phantoms, phantoms though they be, are tenacious of life; they have teeth and nails in their shadowy substance, and we must grapple with them, body to body, and make war upon them, and that, too, without cessation; for it is one of the fatalities of humanity to be condemned to eternal struggle with phantoms. A shadow is hard to seize by the throat and dash upon the ground.

A convent in France, in the high noon of the nineteenth century, is a college of owls confronting the day. A cloister in the open act of asceticism in the full face of the city of '89, of 1830 and of 1848, Rome blooming forth in Paris, is an anachronism. In ordinary times to disperse an anachronism and cause it to vanish one has only to make it spell the year of our Lord. But we do not live in ordinary times.

Let us attack, then.

Let us attack, but let us distinguish. The characteristic of truth is never to run into excess. What need has she of exaggeration? Some things must be destroyed, and some things must be merely cleared up and investigated. What power there is in a courteous and serious examination! Let us not, therefore, carry flame where light alone will suffice.

Well, then, assuming that we are in the nineteenth century, we are opposed, as a general proposition, and in every nation, in Asia as well as in Europe, in Judea as well as in Turkey, to ascetic seclusion in monasteries. He who says "convent" says "marsh." Their putrescence is apparent, their stagnation is baleful, their fermentation fevers and infects the nations, and their increase becomes an Egyptian plague. We can not, without a shudder, think of those countries where Fakirs, Bonzes, Santons, Caloyers, Marabouts, and Talapoins multiply in swarms, like vermin.

Having said this much, the religious question still remains. This question has some mysterious aspects, and we must ask leave to look it steadily in the face.

IV

THE CONVENT VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF PRINCIPLE

MEN come together and live in common. By what right? By virtue of the right of association.

They shut themselves up. By what right? By virtue of the right every man has to open or shut his door.

They do not go out. By what right? By virtue of the right to go and come, which implies the right to stay at home.

And what are they doing there at home?

They speak in low tones; they keep their eyes fixed on the ground; they work. They give up the world, cities, sensual enjoyments, pleasures, vanities, pride, interest. They go clad in coarse woolen or coarse linen. Not one of them possesses any property whatever. Upon entering he who was rich becomes poor. What he has he gives to all. He who was what is called a nobleman, a man of rank, a lord, is the equal of him who was a peasant. The cell is the same for all. All undergo the same tonsure, wear the same frock, eat the same black bread, sleep on the same straw, and die on the same ashes. The same sackcloth is on every back, the same rope about every waist. If it be the rule to go barefooted, all go with naked feet. There may be a prince among them; the prince is a shadow like all the rest. Titles there are none. Family names, even, have all disappeared. They answer only to Christian names. All are bowed beneath the equality of their baptismal names. They have dissolved the family of the flesh, and have formed, in their community, the family of the spirit. They have no other relatives than all mankind. They succor the poor, they tend the sick. They choose out those whom they are to obey, and they address one another by the title: "Brother!"

You stop me, exclaiming: "But that is the ideal monastery!"

It is enough that it is a possible monastery, for me to take it into consideration.

Hence it is that, in the preceding book, I spoke of a convent with respect. The Middle Ages aside, Asia aside,

and the historical and political question reserved, in the purely philosophical point of view, beyond the necessities of militant polemics, on condition that the monastery be absolutely voluntary and contain none but willing devotees, I should always look upon the monastic community with a certain serious and, in some respects, deferential attention. Where community exists, there likewise exists the true body politic, and where the latter is there, too, is justice. The monastery is the product of the formula: "Equality, fraternity!" Oh! how great is liberty! And how glorious the transfiguration! Liberty suffices to transform the monastery into a republic!

Let us proceed.

These men or women who live within those four walls, and dress in hair-cloth, are equal in condition and call each other brother or sister. It is well, but do they do aught else? Yes.

What? They gaze into the gloom, they kneel, and they join their hands.

What does that mean?

V

PRAYER

THEY pray. To whom? To God.
Pray to God? What is meant by that?

Is there an infinite outside of us? Is this infinite one, inherent, permanent; necessarily substantial, because it is infinite, and because, if matter were wanting to it, it would in that respect be limited; necessarily intelligent, because it is infinite, and because, if it lacked intelligence, it would be to that extent finite? Does this infinite awaken in us the idea of essence, while we are able to attribute to ourselves the idea of existence only? In other words, is it not the absolute of which we are the relative?

At the same time, while there is an infinite outside of us, is there not an infinite within us? These two infinities (fearful plural!)—do they not rest superposed on one another? Does not the second infinite underlie the first, so to speak? Is it not the mirror, the reflection, the echo of the first, an abyss concentric with another abyss? Is this second infinite intelligent also? Does it think? Does

it love? Does it will? If the two infinities be intelligent, each one of them has a will principle, and there is a "me" in the infinite above as there is a "me" in the infinite below. The "me" below is the soul; the "me" above is God.

To place, by process of thought, the infinite below in contact with the infinite above is called "prayer."

Let us not take anything away from the human mind; suppression is evil. We must reform and transform. Certain faculties of man are directed toward the unknown; thought, meditation, prayer. The unknown is an ocean. What is conscience? It is the compass of the unknown. Thought, meditation, prayer—these are the great mysterious pointings of the needle. Let us respect them. Whither tend these majestic irradiations of the soul? Into the shadow—that is, toward the light.

The grandeur of democracy is that it denies nothing and denounces nothing of humanity. Close by the rights of man, side by side with them, at least, are the rights of the soul.

To crush out fanaticisms and revere the infinite, such is the law. Let us not confine ourselves to falling prostrate beneath the tree of creation and contemplating its vast ramifications full of stars. We have a duty to perform, to cultivate the human soul, to defend mystery against miracle, to adore the incomprehensible and reject the absurd; to admit nothing that is inexplicable excepting what is necessary, to purify faith and obliterate superstition from the face of religion, to remove the vermin from the garden of God.

VI

ABSOLUTE EXCELLENCE OF PRAYER

AS to methods of prayer, all are good, if they be but sincere. Turn your book over and be in the infinite.

There is, we are aware, a philosophy that denies the infinite. There is also a philosophy, classed pathologically, which denies the sun; this philosophy is called blindness.

To set up a sense we lack as a source of truth is a fine piece of blind man's assurance.

And the rarity of it consists in the haughty air of superiority and compassion which is assumed toward the

philosophy that sees God by this philosophy that has to grope its way. It makes one think of a mole exclaiming: "How they excite my pity with their prate about a sun!"

There are, we know, illustrious and mighty atheists. These men, in fact, led round again toward truth by their very power, are not absolutely sure of being atheists; with them, the matter is nothing but a question of definitions, and, at all events, if they do not believe in God, being great minds, they prove God.

We hail, in them, philosophers, while at the same time inexorably disputing their philosophy.

But, let us proceed.

An admirable thing, too, is the facility of settling everything to one's satisfaction with words. A metaphysical school at the north, slightly impregnated with the fogs, has imagined that it effected a revolution in the human understanding by substituting for the word "Force" the word "Will."

To say "the plant wills," instead of "the plant grows," would be, indeed, pregnant with meaning if you were to add "the universe wills." Why? Because this would flow from it; the plant wills, then it has a "me"; the universe wills, then it has a God.

To us, however, who, in direct opposition to this school, reject nothing *à priori*, a will in the plant, which is accepted by this school, appears more difficult to admit than a will in the universe, which it denies.

To deny the will of the Infinite, that is to say, God, can be done only on condition of denying the Infinite itself. We have demonstrated that.

Denial of the Infinite leads directly to nihilism. Everything becomes "a conception of the mind."

With nihilism no discussion is possible. For the logical nihilist doubts the existence of his interlocutor and is not quite sure that he exists himself.

From his point of view it is possible that he may be to himself only "a conception of his mind."

However, he does not perceive that all he has denied he admits in a mass by merely pronouncing the word "mind."

To sum up, no path is left open for thought by a philosophy that makes everything come to but one conclusion, the monosyllable "No."

To "No" there is but one reply: "Yes."

Nihilism has no scope. There is no nothing. Zero does not exist. Everything is something. Nothing is nothing.

Man lives by affirmation even more than he does by bread.

To behold and to show forth, even these will not suffice. Philosophy should be an energy; it should find its aim and its effect in the amelioration of mankind. Socrates should enter into Adam and produce Marcus Aurelius—in other words, bring forth from the man of enjoyment the man of wisdom—and change Eden into the Lyceum. Science should be a cordial. Enjoyment! What wretched aim and what pitiful ambition! The brute enjoys. Thought, this is the true triumph of the soul. To proffer thought to the thirst of men, to give to all, as an elixir, the idea of God, to cause conscience and science to fraternize in them and to make them good men by this mysterious confrontation—such is the province of true philosophy. Morality is truth in full bloom. Contemplation leads to action. The absolute should be practical. The ideal must be made air and food and drink to the human mind. It is the ideal which has the right to say: "Take of it, this is my flesh, this is my blood." Wisdom is a sacred communion. It is upon that condition that it ceases to be a sterile love of science and becomes the one and supreme method by which to rally humanity; from philosophy it is promoted to religion.

Philosophy should not be a mere watch-tower, built upon mystery, from which to gaze at ease upon it, with no other result than to be a convenience for the curious.

For ourselves, postponing the development of our thought to some other occasion, we will only say, that we do not comprehend either man as a starting-point, or progress as the goal, without these two forces which are the two great motors, faith and love.

Progress is the name, the ideal is the model.

What is the ideal? It is God.

Ideal, absolute, perfection, the infinite—these are identical words.

VII

PRECAUTIONS TO BE TAKEN IN CENSURE

HISTORY and philosophy have eternal duties, which are at the same time simple duties—to oppose Caiaphas as bishop, Draco as judge, Trimalcion as legislator, and Tiberius as emperor. This is clear, direct, and limpid, and presents no obscurity. But the right to live apart, even with its inconvenience and abuses, must be verified and dealt with carefully. The life of the cenobite is a human problem.

When we speak of convents, those seats of error but of innocence, of mistaken views but of good intentions, of ignorance but of devotion, of torment but of martyrdom, we must nearly always have “Yes” and “No” upon our lips.

A convent is a contradiction—its object salvation, its means self-sacrifice. The convent is supreme egotism resulting in supreme self-denial.

“Abdicate that you may reign,” seems to be the device of monasticism.

In the cloister they suffer that they may enjoy—they draw a bill of exchange on death—they discount the celestial splendor in terrestrial night. In the cloister hell is accepted as the charge made in advance on the future inheritance of heaven.

The assumption of the veil or the frock is a suicide reimbursed by an eternity.

It seems to us that, in treating such a subject, raillery would be quite out of place. Everything relating to it is serious, the good as well as the evil.

The good man knits his brows but never smiles with the bad man’s smile. We can understand anger, but not malignity.

VIII

FAITH—LAW

A FEW words more.

We blame the Church when it is saturated with intrigues; we despise the spiritual when it is harshly austere to the temporal; but we honor everywhere the thoughtful man.

We bow to the man who kneels.

A faith is a necessity to man. Woe to him who believes nothing.

A man is not idle because he is absorbed in thought. There is a visible labor, and there is an invisible labor.

To meditate is to labor; to think is to act.

Folded arms work, closed hands perform, a gaze fixed on heaven is a toil.

Thales remained motionless for four years. He founded philosophy.

In our eyes cenobites are not idlers, nor is the recluse a sluggard.

To think of the gloom is a serious thing.

Without at all invalidating what we have just said, we believe that a perpetual remembrance of the tomb is proper for the living. On this point the priest and the philosopher agree. *We must die.* The Abbé of La Trappe answers Horace.

To mingle with one's life a certain presence of the sepulchre is the law of the wise man, and it is also the law of the ascetic. In this relation, the ascetic and the sage tend toward a common centre.

There is a material advancement; we desire it. There is also a moral grandeur; we hold fast to it.

Unreflecting, headlong minds say: "Of what use are those motionless figures by the side of mystery? What purpose do they serve? What do they effect?"

Alas! in the presence of that obscurity which surrounds us and awaits us, not knowing what the vast dispersion of all things will do with us, we answer: There is, perhaps, no work more sublime than that which is accomplished by these souls; and we add, there is no labor, perhaps, more useful.

Those who pray always are necessary to those who never pray.

In our view, the whole question is in the amount of thought that is mingled with prayer.

Leibnitz, praying, is something grand; Voltaire, worshipping, is something beautiful. *Deo erexit Voltaire.*

We are for religion against the religions.

We are of those who believe in the pitifulness of orisons and in the sublimity of prayer.

Besides, in this moment through which we are passing, a moment which happily will not leave its stamp upon the nineteenth century; in this hour which finds so many with their brows abased so low and their souls as little uplifted, among so many of the living whose motto is happiness, and who are occupied with the brief, misshapen things of matter, whoever is self-exiled seems venerable to us. The monastery is a renunciation. Self-sacrifice, even when misdirected, is still self-sacrifice. To assume as duty an uninviting error has its peculiar grandeur.

Considered in itself, ideally, and holding it up to truth until it is impartially and exhaustively examined in all its aspects, the monastery, and particularly the convent—for woman suffers most under our system of society, and in this exile of the cloister there is an element of protest—the convent, we repeat, has, unquestionably, a certain majesty.

This monastic existence, austere and gloomy as it is, of which we have delineated a few characteristics, is not life, is not liberty; for it is not the grave, for it is not completion; it is that singular place from which, as from the summit of a lofty mountain, we perceive, on one side, the abyss in which we are, and, on the other, the abyss wherein we are to be. It is a narrow and misty boundary that separates two worlds, at once illuminated and obscured by both, where the enfeebled ray of life commingles with the uncertain ray of death; it is the twilight of the tomb.

For ourselves, we who do not believe what these women believe, but live, like them, by faith, never could look without a species of tender and religious awe, a kind of pity full of envy, upon those devoted beings, trembling, yet confident—those humble yet august souls who dare to live upon the very confines of the great mystery, waiting between the world closed to them and heaven not yet opened; turned toward the daylight not yet seen, with only the happiness of thinking that they know where it is; their aspirations directed toward the abyss and the unknown, their gaze fixed on the motionless gloom, kneeling, dismayed, stupefied, shuddering, and half borne away at certain times by the deep pulsations of eternity.

BOOK EIGHTH—CEMETERIES TAKE WHAT IS GIVEN THEM

I

WHICH TREATS OF THE MANNER OF ENTERING THE
CONVENT

INTO this house it was that Jean Valjean had, as Fauchelevent said, "fallen from heaven."

He had crossed the garden wall at the corner of the Rue Polonceau. That angels' hymn which he had heard in the middle of the night was the nuns chanting matins; that hall of which he had caught a glimpse in the obscurity was the chapel; that phantom which he had seen extended on the floor was the sister performing the reparation; that bell, the sound of which had so strangely surprised him, was the gardener's bell fastened to old Fauchelevent's knee.

When Cosette had been put to bed Jean Valjean and Fauchelevent had, as we have seen, taken a glass of wine and a piece of cheese before a blazing fire; then, the only bed in the shanty being occupied by Cosette, they had thrown themselves each upon a bundle of straw. Before closing his eyes Jean Valjean had said: "Henceforth I must remain here." These words were chasing one another through Fauchelevent's head the whole night.

To tell the truth, neither of them had slept.

Jean Valjean, feeling that he was discovered and Javert was upon his track, knew full well that he and Cosette were lost should they return into the city. Since the new blast which had burst upon him had thrown him into this cloister, Jean Valjean had but one thought—to remain there. Now, for one in his unfortunate position, this convent was at once the safest and the most dangerous place; the most dangerous, for, no man being allowed to enter, if he should be discovered, it was a flagrant crime, and Jean Valjean would take but one step from the convent to prison; the safest, for, if he succeeded in getting permission to remain, who would come there to look for him? To live in an impossible place; that would be safety.

For his part, Fauchelevent was racking his brains. He

began by deciding that he was utterly bewildered. How did M. Madeleine come there, with such walls? The walls of a cloister are not so easily crossed. How did he happen to be with a child? A man does not scale a steep wall with a child in his arms. Who was this child? Where did they both come from? Since Fauchelevent had been in the convent he had not heard a word from M—— sur M——, and he knew nothing of what had taken place. Father Madeleine wore that air which discourages questions; and, moreover, Fauchelevent said to himself: "One does not question a saint." To him M. Madeleine had preserved all his prestige. From some words that escaped from Jean Valjean, however, the gardener thought he might conclude that M. Madeleine had probably failed on account of the hard times, and that he was pursued by his creditors; or it might be that he was compromised in some political affair and was concealing himself, which did not at all displease Fauchelevent, who, like many of our peasants of the north, had an old Bonapartist heart. Being in concealment, M. Madeleine had taken the convent for an asylum, and it was natural that he should wish to remain there. But the mystery to which Fauchelevent constantly returned, and over which he was racking his brains, was that M. Madeleine should be there, and that this little girl should be with him. Fauchelevent saw them, touched them, spoke to them, and yet did not believe it. An incomprehensibility had made its way into Fauchelevent's hut. Fauchelevent was groping amid conjectures, but saw nothing clearly except this: "M. Madeleine has saved my life." This single certainty was sufficient and determined him. He said aside to himself: "It is my turn now." He added in his conscience: "M. Madeleine did not deliberate so long when the question was about squeezing himself under the wagon to draw me out." He decided that he would save M. Madeleine.

He, however, put several questions to himself and made several answers: "After what he has done for me, if he were a thief would I save him? just the same. If he were an assassin would I save him? just the same. Since he is a saint shall I save him? just the same."

But to have him remain in the convent, what a problem was that! Before that almost chimerical attempt Fauche-

levent did not recoil; this poor Picardy peasant, with no other ladder than his devotion, his good-will, a little of that old country cunning, engaged for once in the service of a generous intention, undertook to scale the impossibilities of the cloister and the craggy escarpments of the rules of St. Benedict. Fauchelevent was an old man who had been selfish throughout his life, and who, near the end of his days, crippled, infirm, having no interest longer in the world, found it sweet to be grateful, and, seeing a virtuous action to be done, threw himself into it like a man who, at the moment of death, finding at hand a glass of some good wine which he had never tasted, should drink it greedily. We might add that the air which he had been breathing now for several years in this convent had destroyed his personality, and had at last rendered some good action necessary to him.

He formed his resolution then—to devote himself to M. Madeleine.

We have just described him as a “poor Picardy peasant.” The description is true but incomplete. At the point of this story at which we now are, a closer acquaintance with Fauchelevent becomes necessary. He was a peasant, but he had been a notary, which added craft to his cunning and penetration to his simplicity. Having, from various causes, failed in his business, from a notary he had fallen to a cartman and laborer. But, in spite of the oaths and blows which seem necessary with horses, he had retained something of the notary. He had some natural wit; he said neither *I* is nor *I* has; he could carry on a conversation, a rare thing in a village; and the other peasants said of him: “He talks almost like a gentleman.” Fauchelevent belonged, in fact, to that class which the flippant and impertinent vocabulary of the last century termed half-yeoman, half-clown, and which the metaphors falling from the castle to the hovel label in the distribution of the commonalty half-rustic, half-citizen—pepper-and-salt. Fauchelevent, although sorely tried and sorely used by fortune, a sort of poor old soul worn threadbare, was, nevertheless, an impulsive man, and had a very willing heart; a precious quality, which prevents one from ever being wicked. His faults and his vices, for such he had, were superficial; and, finally, his physiognomy was one of those

which attract the observer. That old face had none of those ugly wrinkles in the upper part of the forehead which indicate wickedness or stupidity.

At daybreak, having dreamed enormously, old Fauchelevent opened his eyes and saw M. Madeleine, who, seated upon his bunch of straw, was looking at Cosette as she slept. Fauchelevent half arose, and said: "Now that you are here, how are you going to manage to come in?"

This question summed up the situation and awakened Jean Valjean from his reverie.

The two men took counsel.

"To begin with," said Fauchelevent, "you will not set foot outside of this room, neither the little girl nor you. One step in the garden, we are ruined."

"That is true."

"M. Madeleine," resumed Fauchelevent, "you have arrived at a very good time; I mean to say very bad; there is one of these ladies dangerously sick. On that account they do not look this way much. She must be dying. They are saying the forty-hour prayers. The whole community is in derangement. That takes up their attention. She who is about departing is a saint. In fact, we are all saints here; all the difference between them and me is, that they say 'our cell,' and I say 'my shanty.' They are going to have the orison for the dying, and then the orison for the dead. For to-day we shall be quiet here; and I do not answer for to-morrow."

"However," observed Jean Valjean, "this shanty is under the corner of the wall; it is hidden by a sort of ruin; there are trees; they can not see it from the convent."

"And I add, that the nuns never come near it."

"Well?" said Jean Valjean.

The interrogation point which followed that well meant: "It seems to me that we can remain here concealed." This interrogation point Fauchelevent answered:

"There are the little girls."

"What little girls?" asked Jean Valjean.

As Fauchelevent opened his mouth to explain the words he had just uttered a single stroke of a bell was heard.

"The nun is dead," said he. "There is the knell."

And he motioned to Jean Valjean to listen.

The bell sounded a second time.

"It is the knell, M. Madeleine. The bell will strike every minute for twenty-four hours until the body goes out of the church. You see, they play. In their recreations, if a ball roll here, that is enough for them to come after it, in spite of the rules, and rummage all about here. Those cherubs are little devils."

"Who?" asked Jean Valjean.

"The little girls. You would be found out very soon. They would cry: 'What! a man?' But there is no danger to-day. There will be no recreation. The day will be all prayers. You hear the bell? As I told you, a stroke every minute. It is the knell."

"I understand, Father Fauchelevent. There are boarding scholars."

And Jean Valjean thought within himself: "Here, then, Cosette can be educated, too."

Fauchelevent exclaimed: "Zounds! they are the little girls for you! And how they would scream at sight of you! and how they would run! Here, to be a man, is to have the plague. You see how they fasten a bell to my leg, as they would to a wild beast."

Jean Valjean was studying more and more deeply. "This convent would save us," murmured he. Then he raised his voice: "Yes, the difficulty is in remaining."

"No," said Fauchelevent, "it is to get out."

Jean Valjean felt his blood run cold.

"To get out?"

"Yes, M. Madeleine, in order to come in, it is necessary that you should get out."

And, after waiting for a sound from the tolling bell to die away, Fauchelevent pursued: "It would not do to have you found here like this. Whence do you come? For me you have fallen from heaven, because I know you; but for the nuns, you must come in at the door."

Suddenly they heard a complicated ringing upon another bell.

"Oh!" said Fauchelevent, "that is the ring for the mothers. They are going to the chapter. They always hold a chapter when anybody dies. She died at daybreak. It is usually at daybreak that people die. But can not you go out the way you came in? Let us see; this is not to question you, but where did you come in?"

Jean Valjean became pale; the bare idea of climbing down again into that formidable street made him shudder. Make your way out of a forest full of tigers, and when out, fancy yourself advised by a friend to return. Jean Valjean imagined all the police still swarming in the quarter, officers on the watch, sentries everywhere, frightful fists stretched out toward his collar, Javert, perhaps, at the corner of the square.

"Impossible," said he. "Father Fauchelevent, let it go that I fell from on high."

"Ah! I believe it, I believe it," replied Fauchelevent. "You have no need to tell me so. God must have taken you into his hand, to have a close look at you, and then put you down. Only he meant to put you into a monastery; he made a mistake. Hark! another ring; that is to warn the porter to go and notify the municipality, so that they may go and notify the death physician, so that he may come and see that there is really a dead woman. All that is the ceremony of dying. These good ladies do not like this visit very much. A physician believes in nothing. He lifts the veil. He even lifts something else, sometimes. How soon they have notified the inspector, this time! What can be the matter? Your little one is asleep yet. What is her name?"

"Cosette."

"She is your girl? that is to say, you should be her grandfather?"

"Yes."

"For her to get out will be easy. I have my door, which opens into the court. I knock; the porter opens. I have my basket on my back; the little girl is inside; I go out. Father Fauchelevent goes out with his basket—that is all simple. You will tell the little girl to keep very still. She will be under cover. I will leave her as soon as I can, with a good old friend of mine, a fruiteress, in the Rue du Chemin Vert, who is deaf, and who has a little bed. I will scream into the fruiteress' ear that she is my niece, and she must keep her for me till to-morrow. Then the little girl will come back with you; for I shall bring you back. It must be done. But how are you going to manage to get out?"

Jean Valjean shook his head.

"Let nobody see me, that is all, Father Fauchelevent. Find some means to get me out, like Cosette, in a basket, and under cover."

Fauchelevent scratched the tip of his ear with the middle finger of his left hand—a sign of serious embarrassment.

A third ring made a diversion.

"That is the death physician going away," said Fauchelevent. "He has looked, and said she is dead; it is right. When the inspector has visé the passport for paradise the undertaker sends a coffin. If it is a mother, the mothers lay her out; if it is a sister, the sisters lay her out. After which I nail it up. That's a part of my gardening. A gardener is something of a grave-digger. They put her in a low room in the church which communicates with the street, and where no man can enter except the death physician. I do not count the bearers and myself for men. In that room I nail the coffin. The bearers come and take her, and whip up, driver; that is the way they go to heaven. They bring in a box with nothing in it, they carry it away with something inside. That is what an interment is. *De profundis.*"

A ray of the rising sun beamed upon the face of the sleeping Cosette, who half opened her mouth dreamily, seeming like an angel drinking in the light. Jean Valjean was looking at her. He no longer heard Fauchelevent.

Not being heard is no reason for silence. The brave old gardener quietly continued his garrulous rehearsal.

"The grave is at the Vaugirard cemetery. They pretend that this Vaugirard cemetery is going to be suppressed. It is an ancient cemetery, which is not according to the regulations, which does not wear the uniform, and which is going to be retired. I am sorry for it, for it is convenient. I have a friend there—Father Mestienne—the grave-digger. The nuns here have the privilege of being carried to that cemetery at nightfall. There is an order of the préfecture expressly for them. But what events since yesterday? Mother Crucifixion is dead, and Father Madeleine—"

"Is buried," said Jean Valjean, sadly smiling.

Fauchelevent echoed the word.

"Really, if you were here for good, it would be a genuine burial."

A fourth time the bell rang out. Fauchelevent quickly took down the knee-piece and bell from the nail and buckled it on his knee.

"This time it is for me. The mother prioress wants me. Well! I am pricking myself with the tongue of my buckle. M. Madeleine, do not stir, but wait for me. There is something new. If you are hungry, there is the wine and bread and cheese."

And he went out of the hut, saying: "I am coming, I am coming."

Jean Valjean saw him hasten across the garden, as fast as his crooked leg would let him, with side glances at his melons the while.

In less than ten minutes Father Fauchelevent, whose bell put the nuns to flight as he went along, rapped softly at a door, and a gentle voice answered: "Forever, forever!" that is to say, "Come in."

This door was that of the parlor allotted to the gardener for use when it was necessary to communicate with him. This parlor was near the hall of the chapter. The prioress, seated in the only chair in the parlor, was waiting for Fauchelevent.

II

FAUCHELEVENT FACING THE DIFFICULTY

A SERIOUS and troubled bearing is peculiar, on critical occasions, to certain characters and certain professions, especially priests and monastics. At the moment when Fauchelevent entered, this double sign of preoccupation marked the countenance of the prioress, the charming and learned Mdle. de Blemeur, Mother Innocent, who was ordinarily cheerful.

The gardener made a timid bow and stopped at the threshold of the cell. The prioress, who was saying her rosary, raised her eyes and said: "Ah! it is you, Father Fauvent."

This abbreviation had been adopted in the convent.

Fauchelevent again began his bow.

"Father Fauvent, I have called you."

"I am here, reverend mother."

"I wish to speak to you."

"And I, for my part," said Fauchelevent, with a boldness at which he was alarmed himself, "I have something to say to the most reverend mother."

The prioress looked at him.

"Ah, you have a communication to make to me."

"A petition!"

"Well, what is it?"

Good man Fauchelevent, ex-notary, belonged to that class of peasants who are never disconcerted. A certain combination of ignorance and skill is very effective; you do not suspect it, and you accede to it. Within little more than two years he had lived in the convent Fauchelevent had achieved a success in the community. Always alone, and even while attending to his garden, he had hardly anything to do but to be curious. Being, as he was, at a distance from all these veiled women, going to and fro, he saw before him hardly more than a fluttering of shadows. By dint of attention and penetration he had succeeded in clothing all these phantoms with flesh and these dead were alive to him. He was like a deaf man whose sight is extended, and like a blind man whose hearing is sharpened. He had applied himself to unraveling the meaning of the various rings and had made them out; so that in this enigmatic and taciturn cloister nothing was hidden from him; this sphinx blabbed all her secrets in his ear. Fauchelevent, knowing everything, concealed everything. That was his art. The whole convent thought him stupid—a great merit in religion. The mothers prized Fauchelevent. He was a rare mute. He inspired confidence. Moreover, he was regular in his habits, and never went out except when it was clearly necessary on account of the orchard and the garden. This discretion in his conduct was counted to his credit. He had, nevertheless, learned the secrets of two men: the porter of the convent, who knew the peculiarities of the parlor, and the gravedigger of the cemetery, who knew the singularities of burial; in this manner he had a double light in regard to these nuns—one upon their life, the other upon their death. But he did not abuse it. The congregation thought much of him, old, lame, seeing nothing, probably a little

deaf—how many good qualities! It would have been difficult to replace him.

The good man, with the assurance of one who feels that he is appreciated, began before the reverend prioress a rustic harangue, quite diffuse and very profound. He spoke at length of his age, his infirmities, of the weight of years henceforth doubly heavy upon him, of the growing demands of his work, of the size of the garden, of the nights to be spent, like last night, for example, when he had to put awnings over the melons on account of the moon; and he finally ended with this: That he had a brother (the prioress gave a start)—a brother not young (second start of the prioress, but a reassured start)—that if it was desired, this brother could come and live with him and help him; that he was an excellent gardener; that the community would get good services from him, better than his own; that, otherwise, if his brother were not admitted, as he, the oldest, felt that he was broken down and unequal to the labor, he would be obliged to leave, though with much regret; and that his brother had a little girl that he would bring with him, who would be reared under God in the house, and who, perhaps—who knows?—would some day become a nun.

When he had finished the prioress stopped the sliding of her rosary through her fingers and said: "Can you, between now and night, procure a strong iron bar?"

"For what work?"

"To be used as a lever."

"Yes, reverend mother," answered Fauchelevant.

The prioress, without adding a word, arose and went into the next room, which was the hall of the chapter, where the vocal mothers were probably assembled. Fauchelevant remained alone.

III

MOTHER INNOCENT

ABOUT a quarter of an hour elapsed. The prioress returned and resumed her seat.

Both seemed preoccupied. We report as well as we can the dialogue that followed.

"Father Fauvent?"

"Reverend mother?"

"You are familiar with the chapel?"

"I have a little box there to go to mass and the offices."

"And you have been in the choir about your work?"

"Two or three times."

"A stone is to be raised."

"Heavy?"

"The slab of the pavement at the side of the altar."

"The stone that covers the vault?"

"Yes."

"That is a piece of work where it would be well to have two men."

"Mother Ascension, who is as strong as a man, will help you."

"A woman is never a man."

"We have only a woman to help you. Everybody does what he can. Because Dom Mabillon gives 417 epistles of St. Bernard, and Merlonus Horstius gives only 367, I do not despise Merlonus Horstius."

"Nor I either."

"Merit consists in work according to our strength. A cloister is not a shipyard."

"And a woman is not a man. My brother is very strong."

"And then you will have a lever."

"That is the only kind of key that fits that kind of door."

"There is a ring in the stone."

"I will pass the lever through it."

"And the stone is arranged to turn on a pivot."

"Very well, reverend mother, I will open the vault."

"And the four mother choristers will assist you."

"And when the vault is opened?"

"It must be shut again."

"Is that all?"

"No."

"Give me your orders, most reverend mother."

"Fauvent, we have confidence in you."

"I am here to do everything."

"And to keep silent about everything."

"Yes, reverend mother."

"When the vault is opened—"

"I will shut it again."

"But before—"

"What, reverend mother?"

"Something must be let down."

There was silence. The prioress, after a quivering of the under-lip which resembled hesitation, spoke:

"Father Fauvent?"

"Reverend mother?"

"You know that a mother died this morning?"

"No."

"You have not heard the bell, then?"

"Nothing is heard at the further end of the garden."

"Really?"

"I can hardly distinguish my ring."

"She died at daybreak."

"And then, this morning, the wind didn't blow my way."

"It is Mother Crucifixion. One of the blest."

The prioress was silent, moved her lips a moment as in a mental orison, and resumed: "Three years ago, merely from having seen Mother Crucifixion at prayer, a Jansenist, Mme. de Béthune, became orthodox."

"Ah! yes, I hear the knell now, reverend mother."

"The mothers have carried her into the room of the dead, which opens into the church."

"I know."

"No other man than you can or must enter that room. Be watchful. It would not look well for a man to enter the room of the dead!"

"Oftener."

"Eh?"

"Oftener."

"What do you say?"

"I say oftener."

"Oftener than what?"

"Reverend mother, I don't say oftener than what; I say oftener."

"I do not understand you. Why do you say oftener?"

"To say as you do, reverend mother."

"But I did not say oftener."

"You did not say it; but I said it to say as you did."

The clock struck nine.

"At nine o'clock in the morning, and at all hours, praise and adoration to the most holy sacrament of the altar," said the prioress.

"Amen!" said Fauchelevent.

The clock struck in good time. It cut short that oftener. It is probable that without it the prioress and Fauchelevent would never have got out of the snarl.

Fauchelevent wiped his forehead.

The prioress again made a little low murmur, probably sacred, then raised her voice: "During her life Mother Crucifixion worked conversions; after her death she will work miracles."

"She will!" answered Fauchelevent, correcting his step, and making an effort not to blunder again.

"Father Fauvent, the community has been blessed in Mother Crucifixion. Doubtless it is not given to everybody to die like Cardinal de Bérulle, saying the holy mass, and to breathe out his soul to God, pronouncing these words: '*Hanc igitur oblationem.*' But without attaining to so great happiness Mother Crucifixion had a very precious death. She had her consciousness to the last. She spoke to us, then she spoke to the angels. She gave us her last commands. If you had a little more faith, and if you could have been in her cell, she would have cured your leg by touching it. She smiled. We felt that she was returning to life in God. There was something of paradise in that death."

Fauchelevent thought he had been listening to a prayer.

"Amen!" said he.

"Father Fauvent, we must do what the dead wish."

The prioress counted a few beads on her chaplet. Fauchelevent was silent. She continued: "I have consulted upon this question several ecclesiastics laboring in our Lord, who are engaged in the exercise of clerical functions, and with admirable results."

"Reverend mother, we hear the knell here much better than in the garden."

"Furthermore, she is more than a departed one; she is a saint."

"Like you, reverend mother."

"She slept in her coffin for twenty years, by the express permission of our holy father, Pius VII."

"He who crowned Emperor Bonaparte."

For a shrewd man like Fauchelevent, the reminiscence was untoward. Luckily, the prioress, absorbed in her thoughts, did not hear him. She continued: "Father Fauvent?"

"Reverend mother?"

"St. Diodorus, Archbishop of Cappadocia, desired that this single word might be written upon his tomb: 'Acarus,' which signifies a worm of the dust; that was done. Is it true?"

"Yes, reverend mother."

"The blessed Mezzocane, Abbé of Aquila, desired to be buried under the gibbet; that was done."

"It is true."

"St. Terence, Bishop of Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber, requested to have engraved upon his tomb the mark which was put upon the graves of parricides, in the hope that travelers would spit upon his grave. That was done. We must obey the dead."

"So be it."

"The body of Bernard Guidonis, who was born in France near Roche Abeille, was, as he had ordered, and in spite of the King of Castile, brought to the church of the Dominicans at Limoges, although Bernard Guidonis was Bishop of Tuy, in Spain. Can this be denied?"

The fact is attested by Plantavit de la Fosse.

"No, indeed, reverend mother."

A few beads of her chaplet were told over silently. The prioress went on: "Father Fauvent, Mother Crucifixion will be buried in the coffin in which she has slept for twenty years."

"That is right."

"It is a continuation of sleep."

"I shall have to nail her up, then, in that coffin."

"Yes."

"And we will put aside the undertaker's coffin."

"Precisely."

"I am at the disposal of the most reverend community."

"The four mother choristers will help you."

"To nail up the coffin I don't need them."

"No. To let it down."

"Where?"

"Into the vault."

"What vault?"

"Under the altar."

Fauchelevant gave a start.

"The vault under the altar!"

"Under the altar."

"But—"

"You will have an iron bar."

"Yes, but—"

"You will lift the stone with the bar by means of the ring."

"But—"

"We must obey the dead. To be buried in the vault under the altar of the chapel, not to go into profane ground, to remain in death where she prayed in life; this was the last request of Mother Crucifixion. She has asked it, that is to say, commanded it."

"But it is forbidden."

"Forbidden by men, enjoined by God."

"If it should come to be known?"

"We have confidence in you."

"Oh! as for me, I am like a stone in your wall."

"The chapter has assembled. The vocal mothers, whom I have just consulted again and who are now deliberating, have decided that Mother Crucifixion should be, according to her desire, buried in her coffin under our altar. Think, Father Fauvent, if there should be miracles performed here! What glory under God for the community! Miracles spring from tombs."

"But, reverend mother, if the agent of the health commission—"

"St. Benedict II, in the matter of burial, resisted Constantine Pogonatus."

"However, the commissary of police—"

"Chonodemaire, one of the seven German kings who entered Gaul in the reign of Constantius, expressly recognized the right of conventuals to be inhumed in religion, that is to say, under the altar."

"But the inspector of the prefecture—"

"The world is nothing before the cross. Martin, eleventh general of the Carthusians, gave to his order this device: '*Stat crux dum volvitur orbis.*'"

"Amen!" said Fauchelevent, imperturbable in this method of extricating himself whenever he heard any Latin.

Any audience whatever is sufficient for one who has been too long silent. On the day that the rhetorician Gymnastoras came out of prison, full of suppressed dilemmas and syllogisms, he stopped before the first tree he met with, harangued it, and put forth very great efforts to convince it. The prioress, habitually subject to the constraint of silence, and having a surplus in her reservoir, rose, and exclaimed with the loquacity of an opened mill-luice:

"I have on my right Benedict, and on my left Bernard. What is Bernard? He is the first Abbot of Clairvaux. Fontaines in Burgundy is blessed for having been his birthplace. His father's name was Têcelin, and his mother's Alethe. He began at Cîteaux and ended at Clairvaux; he was ordained abbot by the Bishop of Chalons-sur-Saône, Guillaume de Champeaux; he had seven hundred novices and founded one hundred and sixty monasteries; he overthrew Abelard at the council of Sens in 1140, and Peter de Bruys and Henry his disciple, and another heterodox set called the Apostolicals; he confounded Arnold of Brescia, struck monk Ralph dumb, the slayer of the Jews, presided in 1148 over the council of Rheims, caused Gilbert de la Porée, Bishop of Poitiers, to be condemned, caused Eon de l'Étoile to be condemned, arranged the differences of princes, advised the king, Louis the Young, counseled Pope Eugenius III, regulated the temple, preached the crusade, performed 250 miracles in his lifetime, and as many as thirty-nine in one day. What is Benedict? He is the patriarch of Monte Cassino; he is the second founder of the Claustral Holiness; he is the Basil of the West. His order has produced forty popes, 200 cardinals, fifty patriarchs, 1,600 archbishops, 4,600 bishops, four emperors, twelve empresses, forty-six kings, forty-one queens, 3,600 canonized saints, and has existed for 1,400 years. On one side, St. Bernard; on the other, the agent of the health commission! On one side, St. Benedict; on the other, the sanitary inspector! The state, health department, funeral regulations, rules, the administration—do we recognize these things? Anybody

would be indignant to see how we are treated. We have not even the right to give our dust to Jesus Christ! Your sanitary commission is an invention of the Revolution. God subordinated to the commissary of police; such is this age. Silence, Fauvent!"

Fauchelevant, beneath this douche, was not quite at ease. The prioress continued:

"The right of the convent to burial can not be doubted by anybody. There are none to deny it save fanatics and those who have gone astray. We live in times of terrible confusion. People are ignorant of what they ought to know and know those things of which they ought to be ignorant. They are gross and impious. There are people in these days who do not distinguish between the great St. Bernard and the Bernard entitled des Pauvres Catholiques, a certain good ecclesiastic who lived in the thirteenth century. Others blaspheme so far as to couple the scaffold of Louis XVI with the cross of Jesus Christ. Louis XVI was only a king. Let us then take heed for God! There are no longer either just or unjust. Voltaire's name is known, and the name of Cæsar de Bus is not known. Nevertheless, Cæsar de Bus is in bliss and Voltaire is in torment. The last archbishop, the Cardinal of Perigord, did not even know that Charles de Gondren succeeded Bérulle, and Francis Bourgoin, Gondren, and Jean Francois Senault, Bourgoin, and Father de Sainte-Marthe, Jean Francois Senault. The name of Father Coton is known, not because he was one of the three who labored in the foundation of the oratory, but because he was the subject of an oath for the Huguenot King Henry IV. St. Francois de Sales is popular with the world because he cheated at play. And then religion is attacked. Why? Because there have been wicked priests; because Sagittaire, Bishop of Gap, was a brother of Salone, Bishop of Embrun, and both were followers of mammon. What does that amount to? Does that prevent Martin de Tours from being a saint and having given half his cloak to a poor man? The saints are persecuted. Men shut their eyes to the truth. Darkness becomes habitual. The most savage beasts are blind beasts. Nobody thinks of hell in earnest. Oh! the wicked people! By the king now means by the Revolution. Men no longer know what is due to

the living or the dead. Holy death is forbidden. The sepulchre is a civil affair. This is horrible. St. Leo II wrote two letters expressly, one to Peter Notaire, the other to the king of the Visigoths, to combat and overthrow, upon questions touching the dead, the authority of the exarch and the supremacy of the emperor. Walter, Bishop of Chalons, in this matter made opposition to Otto, Duke of Burgundy; the ancient magistracy acceded to it. Formerly we had votes in the chapter concerning secular affairs. The Abbot of Cîteaux, general of the order, was hereditary counselor of the Parliament of Burgundy. We do with our dead as we please. Is not the body of St. Benedict himself in France in the Abbey of Fleury, called St. Benedict sur Loire, though he died in Italy, at Monte Cassino, on a Saturday, the 21st of the month of March, in the year 543? All this is incontestable. I abhor the Psallants, I hate the prayers, I execrate heretics, but I should detest still more whoever might sustain the contrary of what I have said. You have only to read Arnold Wion, Gabriel Bucelin, Trithemius, Maurolicus, and Dom Luke d'Achery."

The prioress drew breath, then turning toward Fauchevent:

"Father Fauvent, is it settled?"

"It is settled, reverend mother."

"Can we count upon you?"

"I shall obey."

"It is well."

"I am entirely devoted to the convent."

"It is understood you will close the coffin. The sisters will carry it into the chapel. The office for the dead will be said. Then they will return to the cloister. Between eleven o'clock and midnight you will come with your iron bar. All will be done with the greatest secrecy. There will be in the chapel only the four mother choristers, Mother Ascension, and you."

"And the sister who will be at the post?"

"She will not turn."

"But she will hear."

"She will not listen; moreover, what the cloister knows the world does not know."

There was a pause again. The prioress continued: "You

will take off your bell. It is needless that the sister at the post should perceive that you are there."

"Reverend mother!"

"What, Father Fauvent?"

"Has the death physician made his visit?"

"He is going to make it at four o'clock to-day. The bell has been sounded which summons the death physician. But you did not hear any ring, then?"

"I only pay attention to my own."

"That is right, Father Fauvent."

"Reverend mother, I shall need a lever at least six feet long."

"Where will you get it?"

"Where there are gratings there are always iron bars. I have my heap of old iron at the back of the garden."

"About three-quarters of an hour before midnight; do not forget."

"Reverend mother?"

"What?"

"If you should ever have any other work like this, my brother is very strong. A Turk."

"You will do it as quickly as possible."

"I can not go very fast. I am infirm; it is on that account I need help. I limp."

"To limp is not a crime, and it may be a blessing. The Emperor Henry II, who fought the Antipope Gregory, and re-established Benedict VIII, has two surnames: the 'Saint' and the 'Lame.'"

"Two surtouts are very good," murmured Fauchelevant, who, in reality, was a little hard of hearing.

"Father Fauvent, now I think of it, we will take a whole hour. It is not too much. Be at the high altar with the iron bar at eleven o'clock. The office commences at midnight. It must all be finished a good quarter of an hour before."

"I will do everything to prove my zeal for the community. This is the arrangement. I shall nail up the coffin. At eleven o'clock precisely I will be in the chapel. The mother choristers will be there, Mother Ascension will be there. Two men would be better. But no matter! I shall have my lever. We shall open the vault, let down the coffin, and close the vault again. After which there

will be no trace of anything. The government will suspect nothing. Reverend mother, is this all?"

"No."

"What more is there, then?"

"There is still the empty coffin."

This brought them to a stand. Fauchelevent pondered. The prioress pondered.

"Father Fauvent, what shall be done with the coffin?"

"It will be put in the ground."

"Empty?"

Another silence. Fauchelevent made with his left hand that peculiar gesture which dismisses an unpleasant question.

"Reverend mother, I nail up the coffin in the lower room in the church, and nobody can come in there except me, and I will cover the coffin with the pall."

"Yes, but the bearers, in putting it into the hearse and in letting it down into the grave, will surely perceive that there is nothing inside."

"Ah, the de—!" exclaimed Fauchelevent.

The prioress began to cross herself and looked fixedly at the gardener. "Vil" stuck in his throat.

He made haste to think of an expedient to make her forget the oath.

"Reverend mother, I will put some earth into the coffin. That will have the effect of a body."

"You are right. Earth is the same thing as man. So you will prepare the empty coffin?"

"I will attend to that."

The face of the prioress, till then dark and anxious, became again serene. She made him the sign of a superior dismissing an inferior. Fauchelevent moved toward the door. As he was going out the prioress gently raised her voice: "Father Fauvent, I am satisfied with you; to-morrow, after the burial, bring your brother to me, and tell him to bring his daughter."

IV

IN WHICH JEAN VALJEAN HAS QUITE THE APPEARANCE
OF HAVING READ AUSTIN CASTILLEJO

THE strides of the lame are like the glances of the one-eyed; they do not speedily reach their aim. Furthermore, Fauchelevent was perplexed. It took him nearly a quarter of an hour to get back to the shanty in the garden. Cosette was awake. Jean Valjean had seated her near the fire. At the moment when Fauchelevent entered Jean Valjean was showing her the gardener's basket, hanging on the wall, and saying to her: "Listen attentively to me, my little Cosette. We must go away from this house, but we shall come back, and we shall be very well off here. The good man here will carry you out on his back inside there. You will wait for me at a lady's. I shall come and find you. Above all, if you do not want the Thenardiess to take you back, obey and say nothing."

Cosette nodded her head with a serious look.

At the sound of Fauchelevent opening the door Jean Valjean turned.

"Well?"

"All is arranged, and nothing is," said Fauchelevent. "I have permission to bring you in; but before bringing you in it is necessary to get you out. That is where the cart is blocked! For the little girl it is easy enough."

"You will carry her out?"

"And she will keep quiet?"

"I will answer for it."

"But you, Father Madeleine?"

And, after an anxious silence, Fauchelevent exclaimed: "But why not go out the way you came in?"

Jean Valjean, as before, merely answered: "Impossible."

Fauchelevent, talking more to himself than to Jean Valjean, grumbled: "There is another thing that torments me. I said I would put in some earth. But I think that earth inside, instead of a body, will not be like it; that will not do, it will shake about; it will move. The men will feel it. You understand, Father Madeleine, the government will find it out."

Jean Valjean stared at him and thought that he was raving.

Fauchelevant resumed: "How the d——ickens are you going to get out? For all this must be done to-morrow. To-morrow I am to bring you in. The prioress expects you."

Then he explained to Jean Valjean that this was a reward for a service that he, Fauchelevant, was rendering to the community. That it was a part of his duties to assist in burials, that he nailed up the coffins and attended the grave-digger at the cemetery. That the nun who died that morning had requested to be buried in the coffin which she had used as a bed and interred in the vault under the altar of the chapel. That this was forbidden by the regulations of the police, but that she was one of those departed ones to whom nothing is refused. That the prioress and the vocal mothers intended to carry out the will of the deceased. So much the worse for the government. That he, Fauchelevant, would nail up the coffin in the cell, raise the stone in the chapel and let down the body into the vault. And that in return for this the prioress would admit his brother into the house as gardener and his niece as boarder. That his brother was M. Madeleine and that his niece was Cosette. That the prioress had told him to bring his brother the next evening after the fictitious burial at the cemetery. But that he could not bring M. Madeleine from the outside if M. Madeleine were not outside. That that was the first difficulty. And then that he had another difficulty; the empty coffin.

"What is the empty coffin?" asked Jean Valjean.

Fauchelevant responded: "The coffin from the administration."

"What coffin, and what administration?"

"A nun dies. The municipality physician comes and says: 'There is a nun dead.' The government sends a coffin. The next day it sends a hearse and some bearers to take the coffin and carry it to the cemetery. The bearers will come and take up the coffin; there will be nothing in it."

"Put something in it,"

"A dead body? I have none."

"No."

"What then?"

"A living body."

"What living body?"

"Me," said Jean Valjean.

Fauchelevant, who had taken a seat, sprang up as if a cracker had burst under his chair.

"You!"

"Why not?"

Jean Valjean had one of those rare smiles which came over him like the aurora in a winter sky.

"You know, Fauchelevant, that you said: 'Mother Crucifixion is dead,' and that I added: 'and Father Madeleine is buried.' It will be so."

"Ah! good; you are laughing, you are not talking seriously."

"Very seriously. I must get out!"

"Undoubtedly."

"And I told you to find a basket and a cover for me also."

"Well?"

"The basket will be of pine and the cover will be a black cloth."

"In the first place, a white cloth. The nuns are buried in white."

"Well, a white cloth."

"You are not like other men, Father Madeleine."

To see such devices, which are nothing more than the savage and foolhardy inventions of the galleys, appear in the midst of the peaceful things that surrounded him and mingled with what he called the "little jog-jog of the convent," was to Fauchelevant an astonishment comparable to that of a person who should see a seamew fishing in the brook in the Rue St. Denis.

Jean Valjean continued: "The question is, how to get out without being seen. This is the means. But in the first place, tell me how is it done? Where is this coffin?"

"The empty one?"

"Yes."

"Down in what is called the dead-room. It is on two trestles and under the pall."

"What is the length of the coffin?"

"Six feet."

"What is the dead-room?"

"It is a room on the ground floor with a grated window toward the garden, closed on the outside with a shutter and two doors; one leading to the convent, the other to the church."

"What church?"

"The church on the street, the church for everybody."

"Have you the keys of those two doors?"

"No. I have the key of the door that opens into the convent; the porter has the key of the door that opens into the church."

"When does the porter open that door?"

"Only to let in the bearers who come after the coffin: as soon as the coffin goes out the door is closed again."

"Who nails up the coffin?"

"I do."

"Who puts the cloth on it?"

"I do."

"Are you alone?"

"No other man except the police physician can enter the dead-room. That is even written upon the wall."

"Could you to-night, when all are asleep in the convent, hide me in that room?"

"No. But I can hide you in a little dark closet which opens into the dead-room, where I keep my burial tools, and of which I have the care and the key."

"At what hour will the hearse come after the coffin to-morrow?"

"About three o'clock in the afternoon. The burial takes place at the Vaugirard cemetery, a little before night. It is not very near."

"I shall remain hidden in your tool-closet all night and all the morning. And about eating? I shall be hungry."

"I will bring you something."

"You can come and nail me up in the coffin at two o'clock."

Fauchelevant started back and began to snap his fingers.

"But it is impossible."

"Pshaw! to take a hammer and drive some nails into a board?"

What seemed unheard-of to Fauchelevant was, we repeat, simple to Jean Valjean. Jean Valjean had been in

worse traits. He who has been a prisoner knows the art of making himself small according to the dimensions of the place for escape. The prisoner is subject to flight as the sick man is to the crisis which cures or kills him. An escape is a cure. What does not one undergo to be cured? To be nailed up and carried out in a chest like a bundle, to live a long time in a box, to find air where there is none, to economize the breath for entire hours, to know how to be stifled without dying—that was one of the gloomy talents of Jean Valjean.

Moreover, a coffin in which there is a living being, that convict's expedient, is also an emperor's expedient. If we can believe the monk, Austin Castillejo, this was the means which Charles V, desiring, after his abdication, to see La Plombes again a last time, employed to bring her into the Monastery of St. Juste and to take her out again.

Fauchelevant, recovering a little, exclaimed: "But how will you manage to breathe?"

"I shall breathe."

"In that box? Only to think if it suffocates you."

"You surely have a gimlet; you can make a few little holes about the mouth here and there, and you can nail it without drawing the upper board tight."

"Good! But if you happen to cough or sneeze?"

"He who is escaping never coughs and never sneezes."

And Jean Valjean added: "Father Fauchelevant, I must decide either to be taken here or to be willing to go out in the hearse."

Everybody has noticed the taste which cats have for stopping and loitering in a half-open door. Who has not said to a cat: "Why don't you come in?" There are men who, with an opportunity half-open before them, have a similar tendency to remain undecided between two resolutions, at the risk of being crushed by destiny abruptly closing the opportunity. The overprudent, cats as they are, and because they are cats, sometimes run more danger than the bold. Fauchelevant was of this hesitating nature. However, Jean Valjean's coolness won him over in spite of himself. He grumbled: "It is true, there is no other way."

Jean Valjean resumed: "The only thing that I am anxious about is what will be done at the cemetery."

"That is just what does not embarrass me," exclaimed

Fauchelevant. "If you are sure of getting yourself out of the coffin I am sure of getting you out of the grave. The grave-digger is a drunkard and a friend of mine. He is Father Mestienne. An old son of the old vine. The grave-digger puts the dead in the grave, and I put the grave-digger in my pocket. I will tell you what will take place. We shall arrive a little before dusk, three-quarters of an hour before the cemetery gates are closed. The hearse will go to the grave. I shall follow; that is my business. I will have a hammer, a chisel, and some pincers in my pocket. The hearse stops, the bearers tie a rope around your coffin and let you down. The priest says the prayers, makes the sign of the cross, sprinkles the holy water, and is off. I remain alone with Father Mestienne. He is my friend, I tell you. One of two things; either he will be drunk, or he will not be drunk. If he is not drunk, I say to him: 'Come and take a drink before the "Good Quince," is shut.' I get him away, I fuddle him; Father Mestienne is not long in getting fuddled, he is always half-way. I lay him under the table, I take his card from him to return to the cemetery with, and I come back without him. You will have only me to deal with. If he is drunk I say to him: 'Be off. I'll do your work.' He goes away, and I pull you out of the hole."

Jean Valjean extended his hand, upon which Fauchelevant threw himself with a rustic outburst of touching devotion.

"It is settled, Father Fauchelevant. All will go well."

"Provided nothing goes amiss," thought Fauchelevant. "How terrible that would be!"

V

IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO BE A DRUNKARD TO BE IMMORTAL

NEXT day, as the sun was declining, the scattered passers on the Boulevard du Maine took off their hats at the passage of an old-fashioned hearse, adorned with death's-heads, cross-bones, and tear-drops. In this hearse there was a coffin covered with a white cloth, upon which was displayed a large black cross like a great dunmy with hanging arms. A draped carriage, in which

might be seen a priest in a surplice and a choir-boy in a red calotte, followed. Two bearers in gray uniform with black trimmings walked on the right and left of the hearse. In the rear came an old man dressed like a laborer, who limped. The procession moved toward the Vaugirard cemetery.

Sticking out of the man's pocket were the handle of a hammer, the blade of a cold chisel, and the double handles of a pair of pincers.

The Vaugirard cemetery was an exception among the cemeteries of Paris. It had its peculiar usages, so far that it had its porte-cochère, and its small door which, in the quarter, old people, tenacious of old words, called the cavalier door, and the pedestrian door. The Bernardine-Benedictines of the Petit Picpus had obtained the right, as we have said, to be buried in a corner apart and at night, this ground having formerly belonged to their community. The grave-diggers, having thus to work in the cemetery, in the evening in summer, and at night in winter, were subject to a peculiar discipline. The gates of the cemeteries of Paris closed at that epoch at sunset, and this being a measure of municipal order, the Vaugirard cemetery was subject to it like the rest. The cavalier door and the pedestrian door were two contiguous gratings; near which was a pavilion built by the architect Peronet, in which the doorkeeper of the cemetery lived. These gratings, therefore, inexorably turned upon their hinges the instant the sun disappeared behind the dome of the Invalides. If any grave-digger at that moment was belated in the cemetery, his only resource for getting out was his grave-digger's card, given him by the administration of funeral ceremonies. A sort of letter-box was arranged in the shutter of the gate-keeper's window. The grave-digger dropped his card into this box, the gate-keeper heard it fall, pulled the string, and the pedestrian door opened. If the grave-digger did not have his card he gave his name; the gate-keeper, sometimes in bed and asleep, got up, went to identify the grave-digger and open the door with the key; the grave-digger went out, but paid fifteen francs fine.

This cemetery, with its peculiarities breaking over the rules, disturbed the symmetry of the administration. It

was suppressed shortly after 1830. The Mont Parnasse cemetery, called the Cemetery of the East, has succeeded it, and has inherited this famous drinking-house let into the Vaugirard cemetery, which was surmounted by a quince painted on a board, which looked on one side upon the tables of the drinkers, and on the other upon graves, with this inscription: "The Good Quince."

The Vaugirard cemetery was what might be called a decayed cemetery. It was falling into disuse. Mould was invading it, flowers were leaving it. The well-to-do citizens little cared to be buried at Vaugirard; it sounded poor. Père Lachaise is very fine; to be buried in Père Lachaise is like having mahogany furniture. Elegance is understood by that. The Vaugirard cemetery was a venerable inclosure laid out like an old French garden. Straight walks, box, evergreens, hollies, old tombs under old yews, very high grass. Night there was terrible. There were some very dismal outlines there.

The sun had not yet set when the hearse with the white pall and the black cross entered the avenue of the Vaugirard cemetery. The lame man who followed it was no other than Fauchelevant.

The burial of Mother Crucifixion under the altar, the departure of Cosette, the introduction of Jean Valjean into the dead-room, all had been carried out without obstruction, and nothing had gone wrong.

We will say, by the way, the inhumation of Mother Crucifixion under the convent altar is, to us, a perfectly venial thing. It is one of those faults which resemble a duty. The nuns had accomplished it, not only without discomposure, but with an approving conscience. In the cloister, what is called the "government" is only an interference with authority, an interference which is always questionable. First, the rules, as to the code, we will see. Men, make as many laws as you please, but keep them for yourselves. The tribute to Cæsar is never more than the remnant of the tribute to God. A prince is nothing in presence of a principle.

Fauchelevant limped behind the hearse very well satisfied. His two twin plots, one with the nuns, the other with M. Madeleine, one for the convent, the other against it, had succeeded equally well. Jean Valjean's calmness

had that powerful tranquillity which is contagious. Fauchelevant had now no doubt of success. What remained to be done was nothing. Within two years he had fuddled the grave-digger ten times, good Father Mestienne, a rubicund old fellow. Father Mestienne was play for him. He did what he liked with him. He got him drunk at will and at his fancy. Mestienne saw through Fauchelevant's eyes. Fauchelevant's security was complete.

At the moment the convoy entered the avenue leading to the cemetery Fauchelevant, happy, looked at the hearse and rubbed his big hands together, saying, in an undertone: "Here's a farce!"

Suddenly the hearse stopped; they were at the gate. It was necessary to exhibit the burial permit. The undertaker whispered with the porter of the cemetery. During this colloquy, which always causes a delay of a minute or two, somebody, an unknown man, came and placed himself behind the hearse at Fauchelevant's side. He was a workingman, who wore a vest with large pockets and had a pick under his arm.

Fauchelevant looked at this unknown man.

"Who are you?" he asked.

The man answered: "The grave-digger."

Should a man survive a cannon-shot through his breast, he would present the appearance that Fauchelevant did.

"The grave-digger?"

"Yes."

"You!"

"Me."

"The grave-digger is Father Mestienne."

"He was."

"How! he was?"

"He is dead."

Fauchelevant was ready for anything but this, that a grave-digger could die. It is, however, true; grave-diggers themselves die. By dint of digging graves for others they open their own.

Fauchelevant remained speechless. He had hardly the strength to stammer out: "But it's not possible!"

"It is so."

"But," repeated he, feebly, "the grave-digger is Father Mestienne."

"After Napoleon, Louis XVIII. After Mestienne, Gribier. Peasant, my name is Gribier."

Fauchelevant grew pale; he stared at Gribier.

He was a long, thin, livid man, perfectly funereal. He had the appearance of a broken-down doctor turned grave-digger.

Fauchelevant burst out laughing.

"Ah! what droll things happen! Father Mestienne is dead. Little Father Mestienne is dead, but hurrah for little Father Lenoir! You know what little Father Lenoir is? It is the mug of red for a six spot. It is the mug of Surène; zounds! real Paris Surène. So he is dead, old Mestienne! I am sorry for it; he was a jolly fellow. But you, too, you are a jolly fellow. Isn't that so, comrade? we will go and take a drink together, right away."

The man answered: "I have studied, I have graduated. I never drink."

The hearse had started, and was rolling along the main avenue of the cemetery.

Fauchelevant had slackened his pace. He limped still more from anxiety than from infirmity.

The grave-digger walked before him.

Fauchelevant again scrutinized the unexpected Gribier.

He was one of those men who, though young, have an old appearance, and who, though thin, are very strong.

"Comrade!" cried Fauchelevant.

The man turned.

"I am the grave-digger of the convent."

"My colleague," said the man.

Fauchelevant, illiterate, but very keen, understood that he had to do with a very formidable species, a good talker.

He mumbled out: "Is it so, Father Mestienne is dead?"

The man answered:

"Perfectly. The good God consulted his list of bills payable. It was Father Mestienne's turn. Father Mestienne is dead."

Fauchelevant repeated mechanically: "The good God."

"The good God," said the man, authoritatively: "What the philosophers call the Eternal Father; the Jacobins the Supreme Being."

"Are we not going to make each other's acquaintance?" stammered Fauchelevant.

"It is made. You are a peasant, I am a Parisian."

"We are not acquainted as long as we have not drunk together. He who empties his glass empties his heart. Come and drink with me. You can't refuse."

"Business first."

Fauchelevant said to himself: "I am lost."

They were now only a few rods from the path that led to the nuns' corner.

The grave-digger continued: "Peasant, I have seven youngsters that I must feed. As they must eat, I must not drink."

And he added with the satisfaction of a serious being who is making a sententious phrase: "Their hunger is the enemy of my thirst."

The hearse turned a huge cypress, left the main path, took a little one, entered upon the grounds, and was lost in a thicket. This indicated the immediate proximity of the grave. Fauchelevant slackened his pace, but could not slacken that of the hearse. Luckily the mellow soil, wet by the winter rains, stuck to the wheels, and made the track heavy.

He approached the grave-digger.

"They have such a good little Argenteuil wine," suggested Fauchelevant.

"Villager," continued the man, "I ought not to be a grave-digger. My father was porter at the Prytanée. He intended me for literature. But he was unfortunate. He met with losses at the bourse, and I was obliged to renounce the condition of an author. However, I am still a public scribe."

"But, then, you are not the grave-digger?" replied Fauchelevant, catching a straw, feeble as it was.

"One does not prevent the other. I cumulate."

Fauchelevant did not understand this last word.

"Let us go and drink," said he.

Here an observation is necessary. Fauchelevant, whatever was his anguish, proposed to drink, but did not explain himself on one point; who should pay? Ordinarily Fauchelevant proposed, and Father Mestienne paid. A proposal to drink resulted evidently from the new situation produced by the fact of the new grave-digger, and this proposal he must make; but the old gardener left, not

unintentionally, the proverbial quarter of an hour of Rabelais in the shade. As for him, Fauchelevant, however excited he was, he did not care about paying.

The grave-digger went on, with a smile of superiority: "We must live. I accepted the succession of Father Mestienne. When one has almost finished his classes he is a philosopher. To the labor of my hand I have added the labor of my arm. I have my little writer's shop at the market in the Rue de Sèvres. You know? the market of the Parapluies. All the cooks of the Croix Rouge come to me; I patch up their declarations to their true loves. In the morning I write love-letters; in the evening I dig graves. Such is life, countryman."

The hearse advanced; Fauchelevant, full of anxiety, looked about him on all sides. Great drops of sweat were falling from his forehead.

"However," continued the grave-digger, "one can not serve two mistresses; I must choose between the pen and the pick. The pick hurts my hands."

The hearse stopped.

The choir-boy got out of the mourning carriage, then the priest.

One of the forward wheels of the hearse mounted on a little heap of earth, beyond which was seen an open grave.

"Here is a farce!" repeated Fauchelevant in consternation.

VI

IN THE NARROW HOUSE

WHO was in the coffin? We know Jean Valjean. Jean Valjean had arranged it so that he could live in it, and could breathe a very little.

It is a strange thing to what extent an easy conscience gives calmness in other respects. The entire combination prearranged by Jean Valjean had been executed, and executed well, since the night before. He counted, as did Fauchelevant, upon Father Mestienne. He had no doubt of the result. Never was a situation more critical, never calmness more complete.

The four boards of the coffin exhaled a kind of terrible peace. It seemed as if something of the repose of the dead had entered into the tranquillity of Jean Valjean.

From within that coffin he had been able to follow, and he had followed, all the phases of the fearful drama which he was playing with death.

Soon after Fauchelevant had finished nailing down the upper board Jean Valjean had felt himself carried out, then wheeled along. By the diminished jolting he had felt that he was passing from the pavement to the hard ground; that is to say, that he was leaving the streets and entering upon the boulevards. By a dull sound he had divined that they were crossing the bridge of Austerlitz. At the first stop he had comprehended that they were entering the cemetery; at the second stop he had said: "Here is the grave."

He felt that hands hastily seized the coffin, then a harsh scraping upon the boards; he concluded that that was a rope which they were tying around the coffin to let it down into the excavation.

Then he felt a kind of dizziness.

Probably the bearer and the grave-digger had tipped the coffin and let the head down before the feet. He returned fully to himself on feeling that he was horizontal and motionless. He had touched the bottom.

He felt a certain chill.

A voice arose above him, icy and solemn. He heard pass away some Latin words which he did not understand, pronounced so slowly that he could catch them one after another: "*Qui dormiunt in terræ pulvere, evigilabunt; alii in vitam æternam, et alii in opprobrium, ut videant semper.*"

A child's voice said: "*De profundis.*"

The deep voice recommenced: "*Requiem æternam dono ei Domine.*"

The child's voice responded: "*Et lux perpetua luceat ei.*"

He heard upon the board which covered him something like the gentle patter of a few drops of rain. It was, probably, the holy water.

He thought: "This will soon be finished. A little more patience. The priest is going away. Fauchelevant will take Mestienne away to drink. They will leave me. Then Fauchelevant will come back alone, and I shall get out. That will take a good hour."

The deep voice resumed: "*Requiescat in pace.*"

And the child's voice said: "*Amen.*"

Jean Valjean, intently listening, perceived something like receding steps.

"Now, there they go," thought he; "I am alone."

All at once he heard a sound above his head which seemed to him like a clap of thunder.

It was a spadeful of earth falling upon the coffin.

A second spadeful of earth fell.

One of the holes by which he breathed was stopped up.

A third spadeful of earth fell.

Then a fourth.

There are things stronger than the strongest man. Jean Valjean lost consciousness.

VII

IN WHICH WILL BE FOUND THE ORIGIN OF THE SAYING:
"DON'T LOSE YOUR CARD"

LET us see what occurred over the coffin in which Jean Valjean lay.

When the hearse had departed and the priest and the choir-boy had got into the carriage and were gone, Fauchelevent, who had never taken his eyes off the grave-digger, saw him stoop and grasp his spade which was standing upright in the heap of earth.

Hereupon Fauchelevent formed a supreme resolve.

Placing himself between the grave and the grave-digger and folding his arms he said: "I'll pay for it."

The grave-digger eyed him with amazement and replied: "What, peasant?"

Fauchelevent repeated: "I'll pay for it."

"For what?"

"For the wine."

"What wine?"

"The Argenteuil."

"Where's the Argenteuil?"

"At the 'Good Quince.'"

"Go to the devil!" said the grave-digger.

And he threw a spadeful of earth upon the coffin.

The coffin gave back a hollow sound. Fauchelevent felt himself stagger and nearly fell into the grave. In

a voice in which the strangling sound of the death-rattle began to be heard, he cried: "Come, comrade, before the 'Good Quince' closes!"

The grave-digger took up another spadeful of earth. Fauchelevent continued: "I'll pay," and he seized the grave-digger by the arm. "Hark ye, comrade," he said: "I am the grave-digger of the convent and have come here to help you. It's a job we can do at night. Let us take a drink first."

And as he spoke, even while clinging desperately to this urgent effort, he asked himself, with some misgiving: "And even should he drink—will he get tipsy?"

"Good rustic," said the grave-digger, "if you insist, I consent. We'll have a drink, but after my work, never before it."

And he tossed his spade again. Fauchelevent held him.

"It is Argenteuil at six sous the pint!"

"Ah, bah!" said the grave-digger; "you're a bore. Ding-dong, ding-dong, the same thing over and over again; that's all you can say. Be off about your business."

And he threw in the second spadeful.

Fauchelevent had reached that point where a man knows no longer what he is saying.

"Oh! come on and take a glass, since I'm the one to pay," he again repeated.

"When we've put the child to bed," said the grave-digger.

He tossed in the third spadeful; then, plunging his spade into the earth, he added: "You see, now, it's going to be cold to-night; and the dead one would cry out after us if we were to plant her there without good covering."

At this moment, in the act of filling his spade, the grave-digger stooped low, and the pocket of his vest gaped open.

The bewildered eye of Fauchelevent rested mechanically on this pocket, and remained fixed.

The sun was not yet hidden behind the horizon, and there was still light enough to distinguish something white in the gaping pocket.

All the lightning which the eyes of a Picardy peasant can contain flashed into the pupils of Fauchelevent. A new idea had struck him.

Without the grave-digger, who was occupied with his

spadeful of earth, perceiving him, he slipped his hand from behind into the pocket and took from him the white object it contained.

The grave-digger flung into the grave the fourth spadeful.

Just as he was turning to take the fifth Fauchelevant, looking at him with imperturbable calmness, asked: "By the way, my new friend, have you your card?"

The grave-digger stopped.

"What card?"

"The sun is setting."

"Well, let him put on his night-cap."

"The cemetery gate will be closed."

"Well, what then?"

"Have you your card?"

"Oh! my card!" said the grave-digger, and he felt in his pocket.

Having rummaged one pocket, he tried another. From these he proceeded to try his watch-fobs, exploring the first and turning the second inside out.

"No!" said he; "no! I haven't got my card. I must have forgotten it."

"Fifteen francs fine," said Fauchelevant.

The grave-digger turned green. Green is the paleness of people naturally livid.

"Oh, good gracious God, what a fool I am!" he exclaimed. "Fifteen francs fine!"

"Three hundred sou pieces," said Fauchelevant.

The grave-digger dropped his spade.

Fauchelevant's turn had come.

"Come, come, recruit," said Fauchelevant; "never despair; there's nothing to kill one's self about and feed the worms. Fifteen francs are fifteen francs, and, besides, you may not have them to pay. I am an old hand and you a new one. I know all the tricks and traps and turns and twists of the business. I'll give you a friend's advice. One thing is clear—the sun is setting—and the graveyard will be closed in five minutes."

"That's true," replied the grave-digger.

"Five minutes is not time enough for you to fill the grave—it's as deep as the very devil—and get out of this before the gate is shut."

"You're right."

"In that case there is fifteen francs fine."

"Fifteen francs!"

"But you have time. Where do you live?"

"Just by the barrière. Fifteen minutes' walk. No. 87, Rue de Vaugirard."

"You have time if you will hang your toggery about your neck to get out at once."

"That's true."

"Once outside of the gate, you scamper home, get your card, come back, and the gatekeeper will let you in again. Having your card, there's nothing to pay. Then you can bury your dead man. I'll stay here, and watch him while you're gone, to see that he doesn't run away."

"I owe you my life, peasant."

"Be off, then, quick!" said Fauchelevant.

The grave-digger, overcome with gratitude, shook his hands and started at a run.

When the grave-digger had disappeared through the bushes, Fauchelevant listened until his footsteps died away, and then, bending over the grave, called out in a low voice: "Father Madeleine!"

No answer.

Fauchelevant shuddered. He dropped rather than clambered down into the grave, threw himself upon the head of the coffin, and cried out: "Are you there!"

Silence in the coffin.

Fauchelevant, no longer able to breathe for the shiver that was on him, took his cold chisel and hammer and wrenched off the top board. The face of Jean Valjean could be seen in the twilight, his eyes closed and his cheeks colorless.

Fauchelevant's hair stood erect with alarm; he rose to his feet, and then tottered with his back against the side of the grave, ready to sink down upon the coffin. He looked upon Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean lay there, pallid and motionless.

Fauchelevant murmured in a voice low as a whisper: "He is dead!"

Then straightening himself, and crossing his arms so violently that his clinched fists sounded against his shoulders, he exclaimed: "This is the way I have saved him!"

Then the poor old man began to sob, talking aloud to himself the while, for it is a mistake to think that talking to one's self is not natural. Powerful emotions often speak aloud.

"It's Father Mestienne's fault. What did he die for, the fool? What was the use of going off in that way, just when no one expected it? It was he who killed poor M. Madeleine. Father Madeleine! He is in the coffin. He's settled. There's an end of it. Now, what's the sense of such things? Good God! he's dead! Yes, and his little girl—what am I to do with her? What will the fruit-woman say? That such a man could die in that way. Good heaven! is it possible? When I think he put himself under my cart! Father Madeleine! Father Madeleine! Mercy, he's suffocated, I said so—but he wouldn't believe me. Now, here's a pretty piece of business. He's dead—one of the very best men God ever made; ay, the best, the very best! And his little girl! I'm not going back there again. I'm going to stay here. To have done such a thing as this! It's well worth while to be two old graybeards in order to be two old fools. But, to begin with, how did he manage to get into the convent? That's where it started. Such things shouldn't be done. Father Madeleine! Father Madeleine! Father Madeleine! Madeleine! M. Madeleine! M. l'Mayor! He doesn't hear me. Get yourself out of this now, if you please."

And he tore his hair.

At a distance through the trees a harsh, grating sound was heard. It was the gate of the cemetery closing.

Fauchelevant again bent over Jean Valjean, but suddenly started back with all the recoil that was possible in a grave. Jean Valjean's eyes were open and gazing at him.

To behold death is terrifying, and to see a sudden restoration is nearly as much so. Fauchelevant became cold and white as a stone, haggard and utterly disconcerted by all these powerful emotions, and not knowing whether he had the dead or the living to deal with, stared at Jean Valjean, who in turn stared at him.

"I was falling asleep," said Jean Valjean.

And he rose to a sitting posture.

Fauchelevant dropped on his knees.

"Oh, blessed Virgin! How you frightened me!"

Then, springing again to his feet, he cried: "Thank you, Father Madeleine!"

Jean Valjean had merely swooned. The open air had revived him.

Joy is the reflex of terror. Fauchelevent had nearly as much difficulty as Jean Valjean in coming to himself.

"Then you're not dead! Oh, what good sense you have! I called you so loudly that you got over it. When I saw you with your eyes shut, I said: 'Well, there now, he's suffocated!' I should have gone raving mad—mad enough for a strait-jacket. They'd have put me in the Bicêtre. What would you have had me do if you had been dead? And your little girl! the fruit-woman would have understood nothing about it! A child plumped into her lap, and its grandfather dead! What a story to tell! By all the saints in heaven, what a story! Ah, but you're alive—that's the best of it."

"I am cold," said Jean Valjean.

These words recalled Fauchelevent completely to the real state of affairs, which were urgent. These two men, even when restored, felt, without knowing it, a peculiar agitation and a strange inward trouble, which was but the sinister bewilderment of the place.

"Let's get away from here at once," said Fauchelevent.

He thrust his hand into his pocket and drew forth from it a flask with which he was provided.

"But a drop of this first!" said he.

The flask completed what the open air had begun. Jean Valjean took a swallow of brandy and felt thoroughly restored.

He got out of the coffin and assisted Fauchelevent to nail down the lid again. Three minutes afterward they were out of the grave.

After this Fauchelevent was calm enough. He took his time. The cemetery was closed. There was no fear of the return of Gribier the grave-digger. That recruit was at home hunting up his "card," and rather unlikely to find it, as it was in Fauchelevent's pocket. Without his card he could not get back into the cemetery.

Fauchelevent took the spade and Jean Valjean the pick, and together they buried the empty coffin.

When the grave was filled Fauchelevent said to Jean Valjean: "Come, let us go; I'll keep the spade, you take the pick."

Night was coming on rapidly.

Jean Valjean found it hard to move and walk. In the coffin he had stiffened considerably, somewhat in reality like a corpse. The ankylosis of death had seized him in that narrow wooden box. He had, in some sort, to thaw himself out of the sepulchre.

"You are benumbed," said Fauchelevent; "and what a pity that I'm bandy-legged, or we'd run a bit."

"No matter!" replied Jean Valjean, "a few steps will put my legs into walking order."

They went out by the avenues the hearse had followed. When they reached the closed gate and the porter's lodge, Fauchelevent, who had the grave-digger's card in his hand, dropped it into the box, the porter drew the cord, the gate opened, and they went through.

"How well everything goes!" said Fauchelevent; "what a good plan that was of yours, Father Madeleine!"

They passed the Barrière Vaugirard in the easiest way in the world. In the neighborhood of a graveyard a pick and spade are two passports.

The Rue de Vaugirard was deserted.

"Father Madeleine," said Fauchelevent, as he went along, looking up at the houses, "you have better eyes than mine—which is No. 87?"

"Here it is, now," said Jean Valjean.

"There's no one in the street," resumed Fauchelevent. "Give me the pick, and wait for me a couple of minutes."

Fauchelevent went in at No. 87, ascended to the top-most flight, guided by the instinct which always leads the poor to the garret, and knocked, in the dark, at the door of a little attic room. A voice called: "Come in!"

It was Gribier's voice.

Fauchelevent pushed open the door. The lodging of the grave-digger was, like all these shelters of the needy, an unfurnished but much littered loft. A packing-case of some kind—a coffin, perhaps—supplied the place of a bureau, a straw pallet the place of a bed, a butter-pot the place of water-cooler, and the floor served alike for chairs and table. In one corner, on a ragged old scrap of carpet,

was a haggard woman, and a number of children were huddled together. The whole of this wretched interior bore the traces of recent overturn. One would have said that there had been an earthquake served up there "for one." The coverlets were displaced, the ragged garments scattered about, the pitcher broken, the mother had been weeping, and the children probably beaten; all traces of a headlong and violent search. It was plain that the grave-digger had been looking wildly for his card and had made everything in the attic, from his pitcher to his wife, responsible for the loss. He had a desperate appearance.

But Fauchelevent was in too great a hurry for the end of his adventure to notice this gloomy side of his triumph.

As he came in he said: "I've brought your spade and pick."

Gribier looked at him with stupefaction.

"What, is it you, peasant?"

"And, to-morrow morning, you will find your card with the gate-keeper of the cemetery."

And he set down the pick and the spade on the floor.

"What does all this mean?" asked Gribier.

"Why, it means that you let your card drop out of your pocket; that I found it on the ground when you had gone; that I buried the corpse; that I filled in the grave; that I finished your job; that the porter will give you your card, and that you will not have to pay the fifteen francs. That's what it means, recruit!"

"Thanks, villager!" exclaimed Gribier, in amazement. "The next time I will treat."

VIII

SUCCESSFUL EXAMINATION

AN hour later, in the depth of night, two men and a child stood in front of No. 62 Petite Rue Picpus. The elder of the men lifted the knocker and rapped.

It was Fauchelevent, Jean Valjean, and Cosette.

The two men had gone to look for Cosette at the shop of the fruiteress of the Rue du Chemin Vert, where Fauchelevent had left her on the preceding evening. Cosette had passed the twenty-four hours wondering what it meant and trembling in silence. She trembled so much

that she had not wept, nor had she tasted food or slept. The worthy fruit-woman had asked her a thousand questions without obtaining any other answer than a sad look that never varied. Cosette did not let a word of all she had heard and seen in the last two days escape her. She divined that a crisis had come. She felt in her very heart that she must be "good." Who has not experienced the supreme effect of these two words pronounced in a certain tone in the ear of some little frightened creature: "Don't speak." Fear is mute. Besides, no one ever keeps a secret so well as a child.

But when, after those mournful twenty-four hours, she again saw Jean Valjean, she uttered such a cry of joy that any thoughtful person hearing her would have divined in it an escape from some yawning gulf.

Fauchelevant belonged to the convent and knew all the pass-words. Every door opened before him.

Thus was that doubly fearful problem solved of getting out and getting in again.

The porter, who had his instructions, opened the little side door which served to communicate between the court and the garden, and which, twenty years ago, could still be seen from the street in the wall at the extremity of the court, facing the porte-cochère. The porter admitted all three by this door, and from that point they went to this private inner parlor, where Fauchelevant had, on the previous evening, received the orders of the prioress.

The prioress, rosary in hand, was awaiting them. A mother, with her veil down, stood near her. A modest taper lighted—or one might almost say, pretended to light—up the parlor.

The prioress scrutinized Jean Valjean. Nothing scans so carefully as a downcast eye.

Then she proceeded to question: "You are the brother?"

"Yes, reverend mother," replied Fauchelevant.

"What is your name?"

Fauchelevant replied: "Ultimus Fauchelevant."

He had, in reality, had a brother named Ultimus, who was dead.

"From what part of the country are you?"

Fauchelevant answered: "From Picquigny, near Amiens."

"What is your age?"

Fauchelevant answered: "Fifty."

"What is your business?"

Fauchelevant answered: "Gardener."

"Are you a true Christian?"

Fauchelevant answered: "All of our family are such."

"Is this your little girl?"

Fauchelevant answered: "Yes, reverend mother."

"You are her father?"

Fauchelevant answered: "Her grandfather."

The mother said to the prioress in an undertone: "He answers well."

Jean Valjean had not spoken a word.

The prioress looked at Cosette attentively, and then said, aside to the mother: "She will be homely."

The two mothers talked together very low for a few minutes in a corner of the parlor, and then the prioress turned and said: "Father Fauvent, you will have another knee-cap and bell. We need two, now."

So next morning two little bells were heard tinkling in the garden, and the nuns could not keep from lifting a corner of their veils. They saw two men digging side by side, in the lower part of the garden, under the trees—Fauvent and another. Immense event! The silence was broken so far as to say: "It's an assistant gardener!"

The mothers added: "He is Father Fauvent's brother."

In fact, Jean Valjean was regularly installed. He had the leather knee-cap and bell; henceforth he had his commission. His name was Ultimus Fauchelevant.

The strongest recommendation for Cosette's admission had been the remark of the prioress: "She will be homely."

The prioress, having uttered this prediction, immediately took Cosette into her friendship, and gave her a place in the school building as a charity pupil.

There is nothing not entirely logical in this.

It is all in vain to have no mirrors in convents; women are conscious of their own appearance; young girls who know that they are pretty do not readily become nuns; the inclination to the calling being in inverse proportion to good looks, more is expected from the homely than the handsome ones. Hence a marked preference for the homely.

This whole affair elevated good old Fauchelevant great-

ly. He had achieved a triple success; in the eyes of Jean Valjean, whom he had rescued and sheltered; with the grave-digger—Gribier—who said he had saved him from a fine, and at the convent, which, thanks to him, in retaining the coffin of Mother Crucifixion under the altar, eluded Cæsar and satisfied God. There was a coffin with a body in it at the Petit Picpus, and a coffin without a body in the Vaugirard cemetery. Public order was greatly disturbed thereby, undoubtedly, but nobody perceived it. As for the convent, its gratitude to Fauchelevent was deep. Fauchelevent became the best of servants and the most precious of gardeners.

At the next visit of the archbishop the prioress related the affair to his grace, half by way of a confession and half as a boast.

The archbishop, on returning from the convent, spoke of it with commendation, and very quietly, to M. de Latil, the confessor of Monsieur, and, subsequently, Archbishop of Rheims and a cardinal. This praise and admiration of Fauchelevent traveled far, for it went to Rome. We have seen a note addressed by the then reigning Pope, Leo XII, to one of his relatives, monseignor of the Papal embassy at Paris, who bore the same name as his own—Della Genga. It contained these lines: "It seems that there is in a convent in Paris an excellent gardener, who is a holy man, named Fauvent." Not a whisper of all this fame reached Fauchelevent in his shanty; he continued to weed and graft and cover his melon beds without being, in the least, aware of his excellence and holiness. He had no more suspicion of his splendid reputation than any Durham or Surrey ox whose picture is published in the "London Illustrated News," with this inscription: "The ox which won the premium at the cattle show."

IX

THE CLOSE

COSETTE, at the convent, still kept silent. She very naturally thought herself Jean Valjean's daughter. Moreover, knowing nothing, there was nothing she could tell, and then, in any case, she would not have told anything. As we have remarked, nothing habituates children

to silence like misfortune. Cosette had suffered so much that she was afraid of everything, even to speak, even to breathe. A single word had so often brought down an avalanche on her head! She had hardly begun to feel reassured since she had been with Jean Valjean. She soon became accustomed to the convent. Still, she longed for Catharine, but dared not say so. One day, however, she said to Jean Valjean: "If I had known it, father, I would have brought her with me."

Cosette, in becoming a pupil at the convent, had to assume the dress of the schoolgirls. Jean Valjean succeeded in having the garments which she laid aside given to him. It was the same mourning suit he had carried for her to put on when she left the Thenardiers. It was not much worn. Jean Valjean rolled up these garments, as well as the woolen stockings and shoes, with much camphor and other aromatic substances of which there is such an abundance in convents, and packed them in a small valise which he managed to procure. He put this valise on a chair near his bed, and always kept the key of it in his pocket.

"Father," Cosette one day asked him, "what is that box there that smells so good?"

Father Fauchelevent, besides the "glory" we have just described, and of which he was unconscious, was recompensed for his good deed. In the first place, it made him happy; and then he had less work to do, as it was divided. Finally, as he was very fond of tobacco, he found the presence of M. Madeleine advantageous in another point of view; he took three times as much tobacco as before, and that, too, in a manner infinitely more voluptuous, since M. Madeleine paid for it. The nuns did not adopt the name of "Ultimus"; they called Jean Valjean "the other Fauvent."

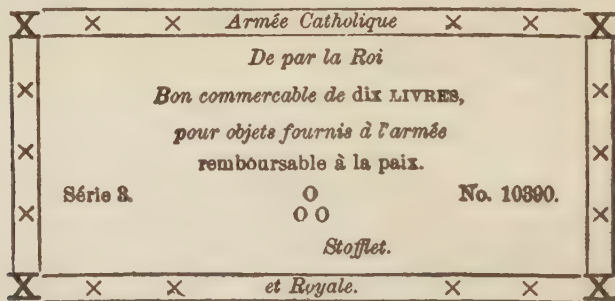
If those holy women had possessed aught of the discrimination of Javert they might have remarked, in course of time, that when there was any little errand to run outside for, on account of the garden, it was always the elder Fauchelevent, old, infirm, and lame as he was, who went, and never the other; but, whether it be that eyes continually fixed upon God can not play the spy, or whether they were too constantly employed in watching one another, they noticed nothing.

However, Jean Valjean was well satisfied to keep quiet and still. Javert watched the quarter for a good long month.

The convent was to Jean Valjean like an island surrounded by wide waters. These four walls were, henceforth, the world to him. Within them he could see enough of the sky to be calm and enough of Cosette to be happy.

A very pleasant life began again for him.

He lived with Fauchelevent in the out-building at the foot of the garden. This petty structure, built of rubbish, which was still standing in 1845, consisted, as we have already stated, of three rooms, all of which were bare to the very walls. The principal one had been forcibly pressed upon M. Madeleine by Fauchelevent, for Jean Valjean had resisted in vain. The wall of this room, besides the two nails used for hanging up the knee-leather and the hoe, was decorated with a royalist specimen of paper money of '93 pasted above the fireplace, of which the following is a counterpart:



This Vendean assignat had been tacked to the wall by the preceding gardener, a former member of the Chouan party, who had died at the convent, and whom Fauchelevent had succeeded.

Jean Valjean worked every day in the garden and was very useful there. He had formerly been a pruner, and now found it quite in his way to be a gardener. It may be remembered that he knew all kinds of recipes and secrets of field-work. These he turned to account. Nearly all the orchard trees were wild stock; he grafted them and made them bear excellent fruit.

Cosette was allowed to come every day and pass an hour

with him. As the sisters were melancholy and he was kind, the child compared him with them, and worshiped him. Every day, at the hour appointed, she would hurry to the little building. When she entered the old place she filled it with paradise. Jean Valjean basked in her presence, and felt his own happiness increase by reason of the happiness he conferred on Cosette. The delight we inspire in others has this enchanting peculiarity that, far from being diminished, like every other reflection, it returns to us more radiant than ever. At the hours of recreation Jean Valjean, from a distance, watched her playing and romping, and he could distinguish her laughter from the laughter of the rest.

For now Cosette laughed.

Even Cosette's countenance had, in a measure, changed. The gloomy cast had disappeared. Laughter is sunshine; it chases winter from the human face.

When the recreation was over and Cosette went in, Jean Valjean watched the windows of her school-room, and, at night, would rise from his bed to take a look at the windows of the room in which she slept.

God has His own ways. The convent contributed, like Cosette, to confirm and complete, in Jean Valjean, the work of the bishop. It can not be denied that one of virtue's phases ends in pride. Therein is a bridge built by the evil one. Jean Valjean was, perhaps, without knowing it, near that very phase of virtue, and that very bridge, when Providence flung him into the convent of the Petit Picpus. So long as he compared himself only with the bishop he found himself unworthy and remained humble; but, for some time past, he had been comparing himself with the rest of men, and pride was springing up in him. Who knows? He might have finished by going gradually back to hate.

The convent stopped him on this descent.

It was the second place of captivity he had seen. In his youth, in what had been for him the commencement of life, and, later, quite recently, too, he had seen another, a frightful place, a terrible place, the severities of which had always seemed to him to be the iniquity of public justice and the crime of the law. Now, after having seen the galleys, he saw the cloister, and, reflecting that he had been

an inmate of the galleys and that he now was, so to speak, a spectator of the cloister, he compared them in his meditations with anxiety.

Sometimes he would lean upon his spade and descend slowly along the endless rounds of reverie.

He recalled his former companions and how wretched they were. They rose at dawn and toiled until night. Scarcely allowed to sleep, they lay on camp-beds and were permitted to have mattresses but two inches thick, in halls which were warmed only during the most inclement months. They were attired in hideous red sacks, and had given to them, as a favor, a pair of canvas pantaloons in the heats of midsummer, and a square of woolen stuff to throw over their shoulders during the bitterest frosts of winter. They had no wine to drink, no meat for food, excepting when sent upon "extra hard work." They lived without names, distinguished solely by numbers, and reduced, as it were, to ciphers, lowering their eyes, lowering their voices, with their hair cropped close, under the rod and plunged in shame.

Then his thoughts reverted to the beings before his eyes.

These beings, also, lived with their hair cut close, their eyes bent down, their voices hushed, not in shame, indeed, but amid the scoffs of the world; not with their backs bruised by the jailer's staff, but with their shoulders lacerated by self-inflicted penance. Their names, too, had perished from among men, and they now existed under austere designations alone. They never ate meat and never drank wine; they often remained until evening without food. They were attired, not in red sacks, but in black habits of woolen, heavy in summer, light in winter, unable to increase or diminish them, without even the privilege, according to the season, of substituting a linen dress or a woolen cloak, and then, for six months in the year, they wore underclothing of serge which fevered them. They dwelt not in dormitories warmed only in the bitterest frosts of winter, but in cells where fire was never kindled. They slept not on mattresses two inches thick, but upon straw. Moreover, they were not even allowed to sleep, for, every night, after a day of labor, they were, when whelmed beneath the weight of the first sleep, at the moment when they were just beginning to slumber, and,

with difficulty, to collect a little warmth, required to awaken, rise and assemble for prayers in an icy-cold and gloomy chapel, with their knees on the stone pavement.

On certain days, each one of these beings, in her turn, had to remain twelve hours in succession kneeling upon the flags, or prostrate on her face, with her arms crossed.

The others were men, these were women. What had these men done? They had robbed, ravished, plundered, killed, assassinated. They were highwaymen, forgers, poisoners, incendiaries, murderers, parricides. What had these women done? They had done nothing.

On one side, robbery, fraud, imposition, violence, lust, homicide, every species of sacrilege, every description of offence: on the other, one thing only, innocence.

A perfect innocence almost borne upward in a mysterious assumption, clinging still to earth through virtue, already touching heaven through holiness.

On the one hand, the mutual avowal of crimes detailed with bated breath; on the other, faults confessed aloud. And oh! what crimes! and oh! what faults!

On one side, foul miasma; on the other, ineffable perfume. On the one side, a moral pestilence, watched day and night, held in subjection at the cannon's mouth and slowly consuming its infected victims; on the other, a chaste kindling of every soul together on the same hearth-stone. There, utter gloom; here, the shadow, but a shadow full of light and the light full of glowing radiations.

Two seats of slavery; but, in the former, rescue possible, a legal limit always in view, and then, escape. In the second perpetuity, the only hope at the most distant boundary of the future, that gleam of liberty which men call death.

In the former the captives were enchained by chains only; in the other they were enchained by faith alone.

What resulted from the first? One vast curse, the gnashing of teeth, hatred, desperate depravity, a cry of rage against human society, a sarcasm against heaven.

What issued from the second? Benediction and love.

And, in these two places, so alike and yet so different, these two species of beings so dissimilar were performing the same work of expiation.

Jean Valjean thoroughly comprehended the expiation of the first; personal expiation, expiation for one's self.

But he did not understand that of the others of these blameless, spotless creatures, and he asked himself with a tremor: "Expiation of what? What expiation?"

A voice responded in his conscience: the most divine of all human generosity, expiation for others.

Here we withhold all theories of our own; we are but the narrator; at Jean Valjean's point of view we place ourselves and we merely reproduce his impressions.

He had before his eyes the sublime summit of self-denial, the loftiest possible height of virtue; innocence forgiving men their sins and expiating them in their stead; servitude endured, torture accepted, chastisement and misery invoked by souls that had not sinned in order that these might not fall upon souls which had; the love of humanity losing itself in the love of God, but remaining there, distinct and suppliant; sweet, feeble beings supporting all the torments of those who are punished, yet retaining the smile of those who are rewarded. And then he remembered that he had dared to complain.

Often, in the middle of the night, he would rise from his bed to listen to the grateful anthem of these innocent beings thus overwhelmed with austerities, and he felt the blood run cold in his veins as he reflected that they who were justly punished never raised their voices toward heaven excepting to blaspheme, and that he, wretch that he was, had uplifted his clinched fist against God.

Another strange thing which made him muse and meditate profoundly seemed like an intimation whispered in his ear by Providence itself; the scaling of walls, the climbing over inclosures, the risk taken in defiance of danger or death, the difficult and painful ascent—all those very efforts that he had made to escape from the other place of expiation, he had made to enter this one. Was this an emblem of his destiny?

This house, also, was a prison, and bore dismal resemblance to the other from which he had fled, and yet he had never conceived anything like it.

He once more saw gratings, bolts, and bars of iron—to shut in whom? Angels.

Those lofty walls which he had seen surrounding tigers he now saw encircling lambs.

It was a place of expiation, not of punishment; and yet

it was still more austere, more sombre, and more pitiless than the other. These virgins were more harshly bent down than the convicts. A harsh, cold blast, the blast that had frozen his youth, careered across that grated moat and manacled the vultures; but a wind still more biting and more cruel beat upon the dove cage. And why?

When he thought of these things, all that was in him gave way before this mystery of sublimity. In these meditations pride vanished. He reverted again and again, to himself; he felt his own pitiful unworthiness, and often wept. All that had occurred in his existence, for the last six months, led him back toward the holy injunctions of the bishop: Cosette through love, the convent through humility.

Sometimes, in the evening, about dusk, at the hour when the garden was solitary, he was seen kneeling in the middle of the walk that ran along the chapel, before the window through which he had looked, on the night of his first arrival, turned toward the spot where he knew that the sister who was performing the reparation was prostrate in prayer. Thus he prayed, kneeling before this sister.

It seemed as though he dared not kneel directly before God.

Everything around him, this quiet garden, these balmy flowers, these children shouting with joy, these meek and simple women, this silent cloister, gradually entered into all his being, and, little by little, his soul subsided into silence like this cloister, into fragrance like these flowers, into peace like this garden, into simplicity like these women, into joy like these children. And then he reflected that two houses of God had received him in succession at the two critical moments of his life, the first when every door was closed and human society repelled him; the second, when human society again howled upon his track, and the galleys once more gaped for him; and that, had it not been for the first, he should have fallen back into crime, and, had it not been for the second, into punishment.

His whole heart melted in gratitude, and he loved more and more.

Several years passed thus. Cosette was growing.

MARIUS

BOOK FIRST—PARIS ATOMIZED

I

PARVULUS

PARIS has a child and the forest has a bird; the bird is called the sparrow; the child is called the *gamin*.

Couple these two ideas, the one containing all the heat of the furnace, the other all the light of the dawn; strike together these two sparks, Paris and infancy, and there leaps forth from them a little creature. "*Homuncio*," Plautus would say.

This little creature is full of joy. He has not food to eat every day, yet he goes to the show every evening, if he sees fit. He has no shirt to his back, no shoes to his feet, no roof over his head; he is like the flies in the air who have none of all these things. He is from seven to thirteen years of age, lives in troops, ranges the streets, sleeps in the open air, wears an old pair of his father's pantaloons down about his heels, an old hat of some other father, which covers his ears, and a single suspender of yellow listing, runs about, is always on the watch and on the search, kills time, colors pipes, swears like an imp, hangs about the wine-shop, knows thieves and robbers, is hand in glove with the street girls, rattles off slang, sings smutty songs, and, withal, has nothing bad in his heart. This is because he has a pearl in his soul—innocence; and pearls do not dissolve in mire. So long as man is a child, God wills that he be innocent.

If one could ask of this vast city: "What is that creature?" She would answer: "It is my bantling."

II

SOME OF HIS PRIVATE MARKS

THE *gamin* of Paris is the dwarf of the giantess.

We will not exaggerate. This cherub of the gutter sometimes has a shirt, but then he has only one; sometimes he has shoes, but then they have no soles; sometimes

he has a shelter, and he loves it, for there he finds his mother; but he prefers the street, for there he finds his liberty. He has sports of his own, roguish tricks of his own, of which a hearty hatred of the bourgeois is the basis; he has his own metaphors; to be dead he calls "eating dandelions by the root"; he has his own occupations, such as running for hacks, letting down carriage steps, sweeping the crossings in rainy weather, which he styles making *ponts des arts*, crying the speeches often made by the authorities on behalf of the French people, and digging out the streaks between the flags of the pavement; he has his own kind of money, consisting of all the little bits of wrought copper that can be found on the public thoroughfares. This curious coin, which takes the name of "scraps," has an unvarying and well-regulated circulation throughout this little gypsy-land of children.

He has a fauna of his own, which he studies carefully in the corners; the good God's bug, the death's head grub, the mower, the devil, a black insect that threatens you by twisting about its tail, which is armed with two horns. He has his fabulous monster, which has scales on its belly, and yet is not a lizard; has warts on its back, and yet is not a toad; which lives in the crevices of old lime-kilns and dry cisterns; a black, velvety, slimy, crawling creature sometimes swift and sometimes slow of motion; emitting no cry, but which stares at you, and is so terrible that nobody has ever seen it; this monster he calls the "deaf thing." Hunting for deaf things among the stones is a pleasure which is thrillingly dangerous. Another enjoyment is to raise a flag of the pavement suddenly and see the wood-lice. Every region of Paris is famous for the discoveries which can be made in it. There are earwigs in the wood-yards of Ursulines, there are wood-lice at the Pantheon, and tadpoles in the ditches of the Champ-de-Mars.

In repartee, the youngest is as famous as Talleyrand. He is equally cynical, but he is more sincere. He is gifted with an odd kind of unpremeditated jollity; he stuns the shopkeeper with his wild laughter. His gamut slides merrily from high comedy to farce.

A funeral is passing. There is a doctor in the procession. "Hullo!" shouts a *gamin*, "how long is it since the doctors began to take home their work?"

Another happens to be in a crowd. A grave-looking man, who wears spectacles and trinkets, turns upon him indignantly: "You scamp, you've been seizing my wife's waist!"

"I, sir! search me!"

III

HE IS AGREEABLE

IN the evening, by means of a few pennies which he always manages to scrape together, the *homuncio* goes to some theatre. By the act of passing that magic threshold he becomes transfigured; he was a *gamin*, he becomes a *titi*. Theatres are a sort of vessel turned upside down with the hold at the top; in this hold the *titi* gather in crowds. The *titi* is to the *gamin* what the butterfly is to the grub; the same creature on wings and sailing through the air. It is enough for him to be there with his radiance of delight, his fulness of enthusiasm and joy, and his clapping of hands like the clapping of wings, to make that hold, close, dark, fetid, filthy, unwholesome, hideous, and detestable, as it is, a very paradise.

Give to a being the useless, and deprive him of the needful, and you have the *gamin*.

The *gamin* is not without a certain inclination toward literature. His tendency, however—we say it with the befitting quantum of regret—would not be considered as toward the classic. He is, in his nature, but slightly academic. For instance, the popularity of Mdle. Mars among this little public of children was spiced with a touch of irony. The *gamin* called her Mdle. *Muche*.

This being jeers, wrangles, sneers, jangles, has frippery like a baby and rags like a philosopher, fishes in the sewer, hunts in the drain, extracts gayety from filth, lashes the street-corners with his wit, fleers and bites, hisses and sings, applauds and hoots, tempers hallelujah with turalural, psalmodizes all sorts of rhythms from De Profundis to the *Chie-en-lit*, finds without searching, knows what he does not know, is Spartan even to roguery, is witless even to wisdom, is lyric even to impurity, would squat upon Olympus, wallows in the dung heap and comes out of it covered with stars. The *gamin* of Paris is an urchin Rabelais.

He is never satisfied with his pantaloons unless they have a watch-fob.

He is seldom astonished, is frightened still less frequently, turns superstitions into doggerel verses and sings them, collapses exaggerations, makes light of mysteries, sticks out his tongue at ghosts, dismounts everything that is on stilts, and introduces caricature into all epic compositions. This is not because he is prosaic, far from it; but he substitutes the phantasmagoria of fun for solemn dreams. Were Adamastor to appear to him, he would shout out: "Hallo, there, old Bug-a-boo!"

IV

HE MAY BE USEFUL

PARIS begins with the cockney and ends with the *gamin*, two beings of which no other city is capable; passive acceptance satisfied with merely looking on, and exhaustless enterprise; Prudhomme and Fouillou. Paris alone comprises this in its natural history. All monarchy is comprised in the cockney; all anarchy in the *gamin*.

This pale child of the Paris suburbs lives, develops, and gets into and out of "scrapes," amid suffering, a thoughtful witness of our social realities and our human problems. He thinks himself careless, but he is not. He looks on, ready to laugh; ready also for something else. Whoever ye are who call yourselves prejudice, abuse, ignominy, oppression, iniquity, despotism, injustice, fanaticism, tyranny, beware of the gaping *gamin*.

This little fellow will grow.

Of what clay is he made? Of the first mud of the street. A handful of common soil, a breath, and, behold, Adam! It is enough that a God but pass. A God always has passed where the *gamin* is. Chance works in the formation of this little creature. By this word chance we mean, in some degree, hazard. Now, will this pigmy, thoroughly kneaded with the coarse, common earth, ignorant, illiterate, wild, vulgar, mobbish, as he is, become an Ionian, or a Bœotian? Wait *currit rota*, the life of Paris, that demon which creates the children of chance and the men of destiny, reversing the work of the Latin potter, makes of the jug a costly vase.

V

HIS FRONTIERS

THE *gamin* loves the city, he loves solitude, also having something of the sage in him. *Urbis amator*, like Fuscus; *ruris amator*, like Flaccus.

To rove about, musing, that is to say, loitering, is, for a philosopher, a good way of spending time; especially in that kind of mock rurality, ugly but odd, and partaking of two natures which surround certain large cities, particularly Paris. To study the banlieue is to study the amphibious. End of trees, beginning of houses, end of grass, beginning of pavement, end of furrows, beginning of shops, end of ruts, beginning of passions, end of the divine murmurs, beginning of the human hubbub; hence, the interest is extraordinary.

Hence it is that in these by no means inviting spots, which are always termed gloomy, the dreamer selects his apparently aimless walks.

He who writes these lines has long been a loiterer about the Barrière of Paris, and to him it is a source of deepest remembrances. That close-clipped grass, those stony walks, that chalk, that clay, that rubbish, those harsh monotonies of open lots and fallow land, those early plants of the market gardeners suddenly descried in some hollow of the ground, that mixture of wild nature with the urban landscape, those wide, unoccupied patches where the drummers of the garrison hold their noisy school, and imitate, as it were, the lighter din of battle, those solitudes by day and ambuscades by night, the tottering old mill turning with every breeze, the hoisting-wheels of the stone-quarries, the drinking-shops at the corners of the cemeteries, the mysterious charm of those dark high walls, which divide into squares immense grounds, dimly seen in the distance, but bathed in sunshine and alive with butterflies—all these attracted him.

There is hardly anybody but knows those singular places, the Glacière, the Cunette, the hideous wall of Grenelle spotted with balls, the Mont-Parnasse, the Fosseaux-Loups, the white hazel-trees on the high banks of the

Marne, Mont-Souris, the Tombe-Issoire, the Pierre Plate de Chatillon, where there is an old exhausted quarry which is of no further use but as a place for the growth of mushrooms, and is closed on a level with the ground by a trap-door of rotten boards. The Campagna of Rome is one idea; the banlieue of Paris is another; to see in whatever forms our horizon nothing but fields, houses, or trees is to be but superficial; all the aspects of things are thoughts of God. The place where an open plain adjoins a city always bears the impress of some indescribable, penetrating melancholy. There nature and humanity address you at one and the same moment. There the originalities of place appear.

He who, like ourselves, has rambled through these solitudes contiguous to our suburbs, which one might term the limbo of Paris, has noticed dotted about here and there, always in the most deserted spot and at the most unexpected moment, beside some straggling hedge or in the corner of some dismal wall, little helter-skelter groups of children, filthy, muddy, dusty, uncombed, disheveled, playing mumbly-peg, crowned with violets. These are all the runaway children of poor families. The outer boulevard is their breathing medium, and the banlieue belongs to them. There they play truant continually. There they sing, innocently, their collection of low songs. They are, or, rather, they live there, far from every eye, in the soft radiance of May or June, kneeling around a hole in the ground playing marbles, squabbling for pennies, irresponsible, birds flown, let loose, and happy; and the moment they see you, remembering that they have a trade and must make their living, they offer to sell you an old woolen stocking full of May bugs or a bunch of lilacs. These meetings with strange children are among the seductive, but at the same time saddening, charms of the environs of Paris.

Sometimes among this crowd of boys there are a few little girls—are they their sisters?—almost young women, thin, feverish, freckled, gloved with sunburn, with head-dresses of rye-straw and poppies, gay, wild, barefooted. Some of them are seen eating cherries among the growing grain. In the evening they are heard laughing. These groups, warmly lighted up by the full blaze of noonday,

or seen dimly in the twilight, long occupy the attention of the dreamer, and these visions mingle with his reveries.

Paris the centre; the banlieue the circumference; to these children this is the whole world. They never venture beyond it. They can no more live out of the atmosphere of Paris than fish can live out of water. To them beyond two leagues from the barrières there is nothing more. Ivry, Gentilly, Arcueil, Belleville, Aubervilliers, Menilmontant, Choisy-le-Roi, Billancourt, Meudon, Issy, Vanvres, Sèvres, Puteaux, Neuilly, Gennevilliers, Colombes, Romainville, Chatou, Asnières, Bougival, Nanterre, Enghien, Noisy-le-Sec, Nogent, Gournay, Drancy, Gonesse; these are the end of the world.

VI

A SCRAP OF HISTORY

AT the period, although it is almost contemporaneous, in which the action of this story is laid, there was not, as there now is, a police officer at every street corner (an advantage we have no time to enlarge upon); truant children abounded in Paris. The statistics give an average of 260 homeless children picked up annually by the police on their rounds in open lots, in houses in process of building, and under the arches of bridges. One of the nests, which continues famous, produced "the Swallows of the Bridge of Arcola." This, moreover, is the most disastrous of our social symptoms. All the crimes of man begin with the vagrancy of childhood.

We must except Paris, however. To a considerable degree, and notwithstanding the reminiscence we have just recalled, the exception is just. While in every other city the truant boy is the lost man; while almost everywhere the boy given up to himself is in some sort devoted and abandoned to a species of fatal immersion in public vice which eats of him all that is respectable, even conscience itself, the *gamin* of Paris, we must insist, chipped and spotted as he is on the surface, is almost intact within. A thing magnificent to think of, and one that shines forth resplendently in the glorious probity of our popular revolutions; a certain incorruptibility results from the mental

fluid which is to the air of Paris what salt is to the water of the ocean. To breathe the air of Paris preserves the soul.

What we here say alleviates in no respect that pang of the heart which we feel whenever we meet one of these children, around whom we seem to see floating the broken ties of the disrupted family. In our present civilization, which is still so incomplete, it is not a very abnormal thing to find these disruptions of families, separating in the darkness, scarcely knowing what has become of their children—dropping fragments of their life, as it were, upon the public highway. Hence arise dark destinies. This is called, for the sad chance has coined its own expressions, “being cast upon the pavement of Paris.”

These abandonments of children, be it said, in passing, were not discouraged by the old monarchy. A little of Egypt and of Bohemia in the lower strata accommodated the higher spheres and answered the purpose of the powerful. Hatred to the instruction of the children of the people was a dogma. What was the use of “a little learning”? Such was the password. Now the truant child is the corollary of the ignorant child. Moreover, the monarchy sometimes had need of children, and then it skimmed the street.

Under Louis XIV, not to go any further back, the king, very wisely, desired to build up a navy. The idea was a good one. But let us look at the means. No navy could there be, if, side by side with the sailing vessel, the sport of the wind, to tow it along, in case of need, there were not another vessel capable of going where it pleased, either by the oar or by steam; the galleys were to the navy, then, what steamers now are. Hence there must be galleys; but galleys could be moved only by galley-slaves, and therefore there must be galley-slaves. Colbert, through the provincial intendants and the Parliaments, made as many galley-slaves as possible. The magistracy set about the work with good heart. A man kept his hat on before a procession, a Huguenot attitude; he was sent to the galleys. A boy was found in the street; if he had no place to sleep in, and was fifteen years old, he was sent to the galleys. Great reign, great age.

Under Louis XV, children disappeared in Paris; the

police carried them off—nobody knows for what mysterious use. People whispered with affright horrible conjectures about the purple baths of the king. Barbier speaks ingenuously of these things. It sometimes happened that the officers, running short of children, took some who had fathers. The fathers, in despair, rushed upon the officers. In such cases, the Parliament interfered and hanged—whom? The officers? No; the fathers.

VII

THE GAMIN WILL HAVE HIS PLACE AMONG THE CLASSIFICATIONS OF INDIA

THE Parisian order of *gamins* is almost a caste. One might say: nobody wants to have anything to do with them.

The word *gamin* was printed for the first time, and passed from the popular language into that of literature, in 1834. It was in a little work entitled "Claude Gueux" that the word first appeared. It created a great uproar. The word was adopted.

The elements that go to make up respectability among the *gamins* are very varied. We knew and had to do with one who was greatly respected and admired, because he had seen a man fall from the towers of Notre Dame; another, because he had succeeded in making his way into the rear inclosure where the statues intended for the dome of the Invalides were deposited, and had scraped off some of the lead; a third, because he had seen a diligence upset; and still another, because he knew a soldier who had almost knocked out the eye of a bourgeois.

This explains that odd exclamation of a Parisian *gamin*, a depth of lamentation which the multitude laugh at without comprehending. "Oh, Lordy, Lordy! ain't I unlucky! Only think, I never even saw anybody fall from a fifth story"—the words pronounced with an inexpressible twang of his own.

What a rich saying for a peasant was this: "Father So-and-so, your wife's illness has killed her; why didn't you send for a doctor?" "What are you thinking about, friend?" says the other. "Why, we poor people we have

to die ourselves." But, if all the passiveness of the peasant is found in this saying, all the rollicking anarchy of the urchin of the suburbs is contained in the following: A poor wretch on his way to the gallows was listening to his confessor, who sat beside him in the cart. A Paris boy shouted out: "He's talking to his long gown. Oh, the sniveler!"

A certain audacity in religious matters sets off the *gamin*. It is a great thing to be strong-minded.

To be present at executions is a positive duty. These imps point at the guillotine and laugh. They give it all kinds of nicknames: "End of the Soup," "Old Growler," "Sky-Mother," "The Last Mouthful," etc. That they may lose nothing of the sight, they scale walls, hang on to balconies, climb trees, swing to gratings, crouch into chimneys. The *gamin* is a born slater as he is a born sailor. A roof inspires him with no more fear than a mast. No festival is equal to the execution-ground—La Grève, Samson, and the Abbé Montes are the really popular names. They shout to the victim to encourage him. Sometimes they admire him. The *gamin* Lacenaire, seeing the horrible Dautun die bravely, used an expression which was full of future: "I was jealous of him!" In the order of *gamins* Voltaire is unknown, but they are acquainted with Papavoine. They mingle in the same recital, "the politicals" with murderers. They have traditions of the last clothes worn by them all. They know that Tolleron had on a forgerman's cap, and that Avril wore one of otter's skin; that Louvel had on a round hat, that old Delaporte was bald and bareheaded, that Castaign was ruddy and good-looking, that Bories had a sweet little beard, that Jean Martin kept on his suspenders, and that Lecouffé and his mother quarreled. "Don't be finding fault now with your basket," shouted a *gamin* to the latter couple. Another to see Debacker pass, being too short in the crowd, began to climb a lamp-post on the quay. A gendarme on that beat scowled at him. "Let me get up, Mister Gendarme," said the *gamin*. And then, to soften the official, he added: "I won't fall." "Little do I care about your falling," replied the gendarme.

In the order of *gamins* a memorable accident is greatly

prized. One of their number reaches the very pinnacle of distinction if he happens to cut himself badly, "into the bone," as they say.

The fist is by no means an inferior element of respect. One of the things the *gamin* is fondest of saying is: "I'm jolly strong, I am!" To be left-handed makes you an object of envy. Squinting is highly esteemed.

VIII

IN WHICH WILL BE FOUND A CHARMING PLEASANTRY OF
THE LATE KING

IN summer he transforms himself into a frog; and in the evening, at nightfall, opposite the bridges of Austerlitz and Jena, from the coal rafts and washerwomen's boats, he plunges headforemost into the Seine, and into all sorts of infractions of the laws of modesty and the police. However, the policemen are on the lookout, and there results from this circumstance a highly dramatic situation, which upon one occasion gave rise to a fraternal and memorable cry. This cry, which was quite famous about 1830, is a strategic signal from *gamin* to *gamin*; it is scanned like a verse of Homer, with a style of notation almost as inexplicable as the Eleusinian melody of the Panathenæans, recalling once more the ancient "Evohe!" It is as follows: "Ohé! Titi, ohé! lookee yonder! They're coming to ketch ye! Grab yer clothes and cut through the drain!"

Sometimes this gnat—it is thus that he styles himself—can read; sometimes he can write; he always knows how to scrawl. He gets by some unknown and mutual instruction all talents which may be useful in public affairs; from 1815 to 1830 he imitated the call of the turkey; from 1830 to 1848 he scratched a pear on the wall. One summer evening Louis Philippe, returning to the palace on foot, saw one of them, a little fellow, so high, sweating and stretching upon tiptoe to make a charcoal sketch of a gigantic pear on one of the pillars of the Neuilly gateway; the king, with that good nature which he inherited from Henry IV, helped the boy, completed the pear, and gave the youngster a gold louis, saying: "The pear's on

that, too!" The *gamin* loves uproar. Violence and noise please him. He execrates "the" curés. One day in the Rue de l'Université, one of these young scamps was making faces at the porte-cochère of No. 69. "Why are you doing that at this door?" asked a passer-by. The boy replied: "There's a curé there." It was, in fact, the residence of the Papal nuncio. Nevertheless, whatever may be the Voltairean tendencies of the *gamin*, should an occasion present itself to become a choir-boy, he would very likely accept, and, in such case, would serve the Mass properly. There are two things of which he is the Tantalus, which he is always wishing for but never attains—to overthrow the government and to get his trousers mended.

The *gamin*, in his perfect state, possesses all the policemen of Paris, and always upon meeting one can put a name to the countenance. He counts them off on his fingers. He studies their ways, and has special notes of his own upon each one of them. He reads their souls as an open book. He will tell you off-hand and without hesitating—such a one is a traitor; such a one is very cross; such a one is great; such a one is ridiculous; (all these expressions, traitor, cross, great, and ridiculous, have, in his mouth, a peculiar signification). "That chap thinks the Pont Neuf belongs to him, and hinders *people* from walking on the cornice outside of the parapets; that other one has a mania for pulling *persons'* ears, etc."

IX

THE ANCIENT SOUL OF GAUL

THERE was something of this urchin in Poquelin, the son of the market-place; there was something of him in Beaumarchais. The *gamin* style of life is a shade of the Gallic mind. Mingled with good sense it sometimes gives it additional strength, as alcohol does to wine. Sometimes it is a defect; Homer nods; one might say Voltaire plays *gamin*. Camille Desmoulins was a suburban. Championnet, who brutalized miracles, was a child of the Paris streets; he had, when a little boy, besprinkled the porticoes of St. Jean de Beauvais and St. Etienne du Mont; he had chatted with the shrine of St. Genevieve

enough to throw into convulsions the sacred vial of St. Januarius.

The Paris *gamin* is respectful, ironical, and insolent. He has bad teeth because he is poorly fed and his stomach suffers, and fine eyes because he has genius. In the very presence of Jehovah he would go hopping and jumping up the steps of paradise. He is very good at boxing with both hands and feet. Every description of growth is possible to him. He plays in the gutter and rises from it by revolt; his effrontery is not cured by grape; he was a blackguard, lo! he is a hero! Like the little Theban, he shakes the lion's skin; Barra, the drummer, was a Paris *gamin*; he shouts "Forward!" as the charger of holy writ says "Ha! ha!" and in a moment he passes from the urchin to the giant.

This child of the gutter is also the child of the ideal. Measure this sweep of wing which reaches from Molière to Barra.

As sum total, and to embrace all in a word, the *gamin* is a being who amuses himself because he is unfortunate.

X

ECCE PARIS, ECCE HOMO

TO sum up all once more, the *gamin* of Paris of the present day is, as the græculus of Rome was in ancient times, the people as a child, with the wrinkles of the old world on its brow.

The *gamin* is a beauty, and at the same time a disease, of the nation—a disease that must be cured. How? By light.

Light makes whole.

Light enlightens.

All the generous irradiations of society spring from science, letters, the arts, and instruction. Make men, make men. Give them light, that they may give you warmth. Soon or late the splendid question of universal instruction will take its position with the irresistible authority of absolute truth; and then those who govern under the superintendence of the French idea will have to make this choice: the children of France or the *gamins* of Paris; flames in the light or will-o'-the-wisps in the gloom.

The *gamin* is the expression of Paris, and Paris is the expression of the world.

For Paris is a sum total. Paris is the ceiling of the human race. All this prodigious city is an epitome of dead and living manners and customs. He who sees Paris seems to see all history through with sky and constellations in the intervals. Paris has a capitol, the Hôtel de Ville; a Parthenon, a Notre Dame; a Mt. Aventine, the Faubourg St. Antoine; an Asinarium, the Sorbonne; a Pantheon, the Pantheon; a Via Sacra, the Boulevard des Italiens; a Tower of the Winds, public opinion—and supplies the place of the Gemoniæ by ridicule. Its *majo* is the “faraud,” its *Trastevereno* is the suburban; its *hammal* is the strong man of the market-place; its *lazzarone* is the pègre; its cockney is the *gandin*. All that can be found anywhere can be found in Paris. The fish-woman of Dumarsais can hold her own with the herb-woman of Euripides, the discobolus Vejanus lives again in Forioso, the rope-dancer, Therapontigonus Miles, might go arm in arm with the grenadier Vadeboncœur, Damasippus, the curiosity-broker, would be happy among the old curiosity-shops, Vincennes would lay hold of Socrates, just as the whole Agora would clap Diderot into a strong box; Grimod de la Reyniere discovered roast-beef cooked with its own fat as Curtillus had invented roast hedgehog; we see again, under the balloon of the Arc de l’Etoile, the trapezium mentioned in Plautus; the sword-eater of the Pœcilium met with by Apuleius is the swallower of sabres on the Pont-Neuf; the nephew of Rameau and Curculion the parasite form a pair; Ergasilus would get himself presented to Cambacérès by d’Aigrefeuille; the four dandies of Rome—Alcesimarchus, Phœdromus, Diabolus, and Argyrippe—may be seen going down la Courtille in the Labutat post-coach; Alus Gellius did not stop longer in front of Congrio than Charles Nodier before Punch and Judy; Marton is not a tigress, but Pardalisca was not a dragon; Pantolabus the buffoon chaffs Nomentanus the fast-liver at the Café Anglais; Hermogenus is a tenor in the Champs Elysées, and, around him, Thrasius the beggar, in the costume of Bobèche, plies his trade; the bore who button-holes you in the Tuileries makes you repeat, after the lapse of 2,000 years,

the apostrophe of Thesprion: "*Quis properantem me prehendit pallio?*" The wine of Surène parodies the wine of Alba; the red rim of Desaugiers balances the huge goblet of Balatron, Père Lachaise exhales, under the nocturnal rains, the same lurid emanations that were seen in Esquilies, and the grave of the poor, purchased for five years, is about the equivalent of the hired coffin of the slave.

Ransack your memory for something which Paris has not. The vat of Trophonius contains nothing that is not in the wash-tub of Mesmer; Ergaphilas is resuscitated in Cagliostro; the Brahmin Vâsaphantâ is in the flesh again in the Count St. Germain; the cemetery of St. Médard turns out quite as good miracles as the Oumoumié mosque at Damascus.

Paris has an Æsop in Mayeux, and a Canidia in Mdle. Lenormand. It stands aghast like Delphos at the blinding realities of visions; it tips tables as Dodona did tripods. It enthrones the grisette as Rome did the courtesan; and, in fine, if Louis XV is worse than Claudius, Mme. Dubarry is better than Messalina. Paris combines in one wonderful type which has had real existence, and actually elbowed us, the Greek nudity, the Hebrew ulcer, and the Gascon jest. It mingles Diogenes, Job, and Paillasse, dresses up a ghost in old numbers of the *Constitutionnel*, and produces Shadrac Duclos.

Although Plutarch may say: "The tyrant never grows old," Rome under Sylla, as well as under Domitian, resigned herself, and of her own accord put water in her wine. The Tiber was a Lethe, if we may believe the somewhat doctrinal eulogy pronounced upon it by Varus Vibiscus: "*Contra Gracchos Tiberin habemus. Bibere Tiberim, id est seditionem obli visci.*" Paris drinks 250,000 gallons of water per day, but that does not prevent it upon occasion from beating the alarm and sounding the tocsin.

With all that Paris is a good soul. It accepts everything right royally; it is not difficult in the realms of Venus; its Callipyge is of the Hottentot stamp; if it but laughs, it pardons; ugliness makes it merry; deformity puts it in good humor; vice diverts its attention; be droll and you may venture to be a scamp; even hypocrisy, that sublimity of cynicism, it does not revolt at; it is so literary

that it does not hold its nose over *Basilius*, and is no more shocked at the prayer of *Tartuffe* than *Horace* was at the hiccough of *Priapus*. No feature of the universal countenance is wanting in the profile of *Paris*. The *Ma-bile* dancing-garden is not the polyhymnian dance of the *Janiculum*, but the costume-hirer devours the *lorette* there with her eyes exactly as the *procuress* *Staphyla* watched the virgin *Planesium*. The *Barrière du Combat* is not a *Coliseum*, but there is as much ferocity exhibited as though *Cæsar* were a spectator. The *Syrian* hostess has more grace than *Mother Sagnet*, but if *Virgil* haunted the *Roman* wine-shop, *David d'Angers*, *Balzac*, and *Charlet* have sat down in the drinking-places of *Paris*. *Paris* is regnant. *Geniuses* blaze on all sides and red *perukes* flourish. *Adonais* passes by in his twelve-wheeled car of thunder and lightning; *Silenus* makes his entry upon his tun. For *Silenus* read *Ramponneau*.

Paris is a synonym of *cosmos*. *Paris* is *Athens*, *Rome*, *Sybaris*, *Jerusalem*, *Pantin*. All the eras of civilization are there in abridged edition, all the epochs of barbarism also. *Paris* would be greatly vexed had she no guillotine.

A small admixture of the *Place de Grève* is good. What would all this continual merry-making be without that seasoning? Our laws have wisely provided for this, and, thanks to them, this relish turns its edge upon the general carnival.

XI

RIDICULE AND REIGN

OF bounds and limits *Paris* has none. No other city ever enjoyed that supreme control which sometimes derides those whom it reduces to submission. "To please you, O, *Athenians*!" exclaimed *Alexander*. *Paris* does more than lay down the law; it lays down the fashion. *Paris* does more than lay down the fashion; it lays down the routine. *Paris* may be stupid if it please; sometimes it allows itself this luxury; then the whole universe is stupid with it. Upon this *Paris* awakes, rubs its eyes and says: "Am I stupid?" and bursts out laughing in the face of mankind. What a marvel is such a city! How strange a thing that all this mass of what is grand and what is lu-

dicrous should be so harmonious, that all this majesty is not disturbed by all this parody, and that the same mouth can to-day blow the trump of the last judgment and to-morrow a penny whistle. Paris possesses an all-commanding joviality. Its gayety is of the thunderbolt, and its frolicking holds a sceptre. Its hurricanes spring sometimes from a wry face. Its outbursts, its great days, its masterpieces, its prodigies, its epics fly to the ends of the universe, and so do its cock-and-bull stories also. Its laughter is the mouth of a volcano that bespatters the whole earth. Its jokes are sparks that kindle. It forces upon the nation its caricature as well as its ideal; the loftiest monuments of human civilization accept its sarcasms and lend their eternity to its waggeries. It is superb; it has a marvelous 14th of July that delivers the globe; it makes all the nations take the oath of the tennis-court; its night of the 4th of August disperses in three hours 1,000 years of feudalism; it makes of its logic the muscle of the unanimous will; it multiplies itself under all the forms of the sublime; it fills with its radiance, Washington, Kosciusko, Bolivar, Bozzaris, Riego, Bem, Manin, Lopez, John Brown, Garibaldi; it is everywhere, where the future is being enkindled, at Boston in 1779, at the Isle de St. Léon in 1820, at Pesth in 1848, at Palermo in 1860; it whispers the mighty watchword *Liberty* in the ears of the American abolitionists grouped together in the boat at Harper's Ferry, and also in the ears of the patriots of Ancona assembled in the gloom at the Archi, in front of the Gozzi tavern, on the seaside; it creates Canaris; it creates Quiroga; it creates Pisicane; it radiates greatness over the earth; it is in going whither its breath impels, that Byron dies at Missolonghi, and Mazet at Barcelona; it is a rostrum beneath the feet of Mirabeau, and a crater beneath the feet of Robespierre; its books, its stage, its art, its science, its literature, its philosophy are the manuals of the human race; to it belong Pascal, Regnier, Corneille, Descartes, Jean Jacques; Voltaire for every moment, Molière for every century; it makes the universal mouth speak its language, and that language becomes the word; it builds up in every mind the idea of progress; the liberating dogmas which it forges are swords by the pillows of the generations, and with the soul of its thinkers and poets have

all the heroes of all nations since 1789 been made; but that does not prevent it from playing the *gamin*; and this enormous genius called Paris, even while transfiguring the world with its radiance, draws the nose of Bouginier in charcoal on the wall of the Temple of Theseus, and writes "Crédeville the robber" on the pyramids.

Paris is always showing its teeth; when it is not scolding it is laughing.

Such is Paris. The smoke of its roofs is the ideas of the universe. A heap of mud and stone, if you will, but, above all, a moral being. It is more than great, it is immense. Why? Because it dares.

To dare, progress is at this price.

All sublime conquests are, more or less, the rewards of daring. That the Revolution should come, it was not enough that Montesquieu should foresee it, that Diderot should preach it, that Beaumarchais should announce it, that Condorcet should calculate it, that Arouet should prepare it, that Rousseau should premeditate it; Danton must dare it.

That cry, "*Audace*," is a *Fiat Lux*! The onward march of the human race requires that the heights around it should be ablaze with noble and enduring lessons of courage. Deeds of daring dazzle history and form one of the guiding lights of man. The dawn dares when it rises. To strive, to brave all risks, to persist, to persevere, to be faithful to yourself, to grapple hand to hand with destiny, to surprise defeat by the little terror it inspires, at one time to confront unrighteous power, at another to defy intoxicated triumph, to hold fast, to hold hard—such is the example which the nations need and the light that electrifies them. The same puissant lightning darts from the torch of Prometheus and the clay-pipe of Cambronne.

XII

THE FUTURE LATENT IN THE PEOPLE

AS to the people of Paris, even when grown to manhood, it is always the *gamin*; to depict the child is to depict the city, and therefore it is that we have studied this eagle in this open-hearted sparrow.

It is in the suburbs, especially, we insist, that the Pa-

risian race is found. There is the pure blood, there is the true physiognomy; there these people work and suffer, and suffering and toil are the two forms of men. There are vast numbers of unknown beings teeming with the strangest types of humanity, from the stevedore of the *Rapée* to the horse-killer of Montfaucon. "*Fex urbis*," exclaims Cicero; "*Mob*," adds the indignant Burke; the herd, the multitude, the populace. Those words are quickly said. But, if it be so, what matters it? What is it to me that they go barefoot? They can not read. So much the worse. Will you abandon them for that? Would you make their misfortune their curse? Can not the light penetrate these masses? Let us return to that cry: Light! and let us persist in it! Light! light! Who knows but that these opacities will become transparent? Are not revolutions transfigurations? Proceed, philosophers; teach, enlighten, enkindle, think aloud, speak aloud, run joyously toward the broad daylight, fraternize in the public squares, announce the glad tidings, scatter plenteously your alphabets, proclaim human rights, sing your "*Marseillaises*," sow enthusiasms broadcast, tear off green branches from the oak-trees, make thought a whirlwind. This multitude can be sublimated. Let us learn to avail ourselves of this vast combustion of principles and virtues, which sparkles, crackles, and thrills at certain periods. These bare feet, these naked arms, these rags, these shades of ignorance, these depths of abjectness, these abysses of gloom may be employed in the conquest of the ideal. Look through the medium of the people and you shall discern the truth. This lowly sand which you trample beneath your feet, if you cast it into the furnace and let it melt and seethe, shall become resplendent crystal, and by means of such as it a Galileo and a Newton shall discover stars.

XIII

LITTLE GAVROCHE

ABOUT eight or nine years after the events narrated in the second part of this story there was seen, on the Boulevard du Temple, and in the neighborhood of the Château d'Eau, a little boy of eleven or twelve years of

age, who would have realized with considerable accuracy the ideal of the *gamin* previously sketched, if, with the laughter of his youth upon his lips, his heart had not been absolutely dark and empty. This child was well muffled up in a man's pair of pantaloons, but he had not got them from his father, and in a woman's chemise, which was not an inheritance from his mother. Strangers had clothed him in these rags out of charity. Still, he had a father and a mother. But his father never thought of him and his mother did not love him. He was one of those children, so deserving of pity from all, who have fathers and mothers and yet are orphans.

This little boy never felt so happy as when in the street. The pavement was not so hard to him as the heart of his mother.

His parents had thrown him out into life with a kick.

He had quite ingenuously spread his wings and taken flight.

He was a boisterous, pallid, nimble, wide-awake, roguish urchin, with an air at once vivacious and sickly. He went, came, sang, played pitch and toss, scraped the gutters, stole a little, but he did it gayly, like the cats and the sparrows, laughed when people called him an errand-boy, and got angry when they called him a ragamuffin. He had no shelter, no food, no fire, no love, but he was light-hearted because he was free.

When these poor creatures are men, the millstone of our social system almost always comes in contact with them and grinds them, but while they are children they escape because they are little. The smallest hole saves them.

However, deserted as this lad was, it happened sometimes, every two or three months, that he would say to himself: "Come, I'll go and see my mother!" Then he would leave the boulevard, the cirque, the Porte St. Martin, go down along the quays, cross the bridges, reach the suburbs, walk as far as the Salpêtrière and arrive—where? Precisely at that double number—50-52—which is known to the reader—the Gorbeau building.

At the period referred to, the tenement, No. 50-52, usually empty and permanently decorated with the placard "Rooms to Let," was, for a wonder, tenanted by several persons who in all other respects, as is always the case at

Paris, had no relation to or connection with each other. They all belonged to that indigent class which begins with the small bourgeois in embarrassed circumstances, and descends from grade to grade of wretchedness, through the lower strata of society, until it reaches those two beings in whom all the material things of civilization terminate—the scavenger and the rag-picker.

The “landlady” of the time of Jean Valjean was dead, and had been replaced by another exactly like her. I do not remember what philosopher it was who said: “There is never any lack of old women.”

The new old woman was called Mme. Burgon, and her life had been remarkable for nothing except a dynasty of three paroquets, which had in succession wielded the sceptre of her affections.

Among those who lived in the building, the wretchedest of all were a family of four persons—father, mother, and two daughters nearly grown—all four lodging in the same garret-room, one of those cells of which we have already spoken.

This family, at first sight, presented nothing very peculiar but its extreme destitution; the father, in renting the room, had given his name as Jondrette. Some time after this moving in, which had singularly resembled, to borrow the memorable expression of the landlady, the entrance of nothing at all, this Jondrette said to the old woman, who, like her predecessor, was, at the same time, portress and swept the stairs: “Mother So-and-so, if anybody should come and ask for a Pole or an Italian, or, perhaps, a Spaniard, that is for me.”

Now, this family was the family of our sprightly little barefooted urchin. When he came there he found distress, and, what is sadder still, no smile; a cold hearthstone and cold hearts. When he came in they would ask: “Where have you come from?” He would answer: “From the street.” When he was going away they would ask him: “Where are you going to?” He would answer: “Into the street.” His mother would say to him: “What have you come here for?”

The child lived, in this absence of affection, like those pale plants that spring up in cellars. He felt no suffering from this mode of existence, and bore no ill-will to

anybody. He did not know how a father and mother ought to be.

But yet his mother loved his sisters.

We had forgotten to say that on the Boulevard du Temple this boy went by the name of little Gavroche. Why was his name Gavroche? Probably because his father's name was Jondrette.

To break all links seems to be the instinct of some wretched families.

The room occupied by the Jondrettes in the Gorbeau tenement was the last at the end of the hall. The adjoining cell was tenanted by a very poor young man who was called M. Marius.

Let us see who and what M. Marius was.

BOOK SECOND—THE GRAND BOURGEOIS

I

NINETY YEARS OLD AND THIRTY-TWO TEETH

IN the Rue Boucherat, Rue de Normandie, and Rue de Saintonge there still remain a few old inhabitants who preserve a memory of a fine old man named M. Gillenormand, and who like to talk about him. This man was old when they were young. This figure, to those who look sadly upon that vague swarm of shadows which they call the past, has not yet entirely disappeared from the labyrinth of streets in the neighborhood of the temple, to which, under Louis XIV, were given the names of all the provinces of France, precisely as in our days the names of all the capitals of Europe have been given to the streets in the new Quartier Tivoli; an advance, be it said, by the way, in which progress is visible.

M. Gillenormand, who was as much alive as any man can be, in 1831, was one of those men who have become curiosities, simply because they have lived a long time; and who are strange, because formerly they were like everybody else, and now they are no longer like anybody else. He was a peculiar old man, and very truly a man of another age—the genuine bourgeois of the eighteenth century, a very perfect specimen, a little haughty, wear-

ing his good old bourgeoisie as marquises wear their marquisates. He had passed his ninetieth year, walked erect, spoke in a loud voice, saw clearly, drank hard, eat, slept, and snored. He had every one of his thirty-two teeth. He wore glasses only when reading. He was of amorous humor, but said that for ten years past he had decidedly and entirely renounced women. He was no longer pleasing, he said; he did not add: "I am too old," but "I am too poor." He would say: "If I were not ruined, he! he!" His remaining income, in fact, was only about 15,000 livres. His dream was of receiving a windfall and having an income of 100,000 francs in order to keep mistresses. He did not belong, as we see, to that sickly variety of octogenarians who, like M. de Voltaire, are dying all their life; it was not a milk-and-water longevity; this jovial old man was always in good health. He was superficial, hasty, easily angered. He got into a rage on all occasions, most frequently when most unseasonable. When anybody contradicted him he raised his cane; he beat his servants as in the time of Louis XIV. He had an unmarried daughter over fifty years old, whom he belabored severely when he was angry, and whom he would gladly have horsewhipped. She seemed to him about eight years old. He cuffed his domestics vigorously, and would say: "Ah! slut!" One of his oaths was: "By the big slippers of big slipperdom!" In some respects he was of a singular tranquillity; he was shaved every day by a barber who had been crazy and hated him, being jealous of M. Gillenormand on account of his wife, a pretty, coquettish woman. M. Gillenormand admired his own discernment in everything, and pronounced himself very sagacious; this is one of his sayings: "I have indeed some penetration; I can tell, when a flea bites, from what woman it comes." The terms which he oftenest used were: "sensible," "men," and "nature." He did not give to this last word the broad acceptation which our epoch has assigned to it. But he twisted it into his own use in his little chimney-corner satires: "Nature," he would say, "in order that civilization may have a little of everything, gives it some specimens of amusing barbarism. Europe has samples of Asia and Africa in miniature. The cat is a drawing-room tiger, the lizard is a pocket crocodile. The

danseuses of the opera are rosy savagesses. They do not eat men, they feed upon them. Or, rather, the little magicians change them into oysters and swallow them. The Caribs leave nothing but the bones, they leave nothing but the shell. Such are our customs. We do not devour, we gnaw; we do not exterminate, we clutch."

II

LIKE MASTER, LIKE DWELLING

HE lived in the Marais, Rue des Filles de Calvaire, No. 6. The house was his own. This house had been torn down and rebuilt since, and its number has probably been changed in the revolution of numbering to which the streets of Paris are subject. He occupied an ancient and ample apartment on the first story, between the street and the gardens, covered to the ceiling with fine Gobelin and Beauvais tapestry representing pastoral scenes; the subjects of the ceiling and panels were repeated in miniature upon the armchairs. He surrounded his bed with a large screen with nine leaves varnished with Coromandel lac. Long, full curtains hung at the windows and made great, magnificent broken folds. The garden, which was immediately beneath his windows, was connected with the angle between them by means of a staircase of twelve or fifteen steps, which the old man ascended and descended very blithely. In addition to a library adjoining his room he had a boudoir which he thought very much of; a gay retreat, hung with magnificent straw-colored tapestry, covered with fleur-de-lis and with figures from the galleries of Louis XIV, and ordered by M. de Vivonne from his convicts for his mistress. M. Gillenormand had inherited this from a severe maternal great-aunt, who died at the age of one hundred. He had had two wives. His manners held a medium between the courtier, which he had never been, and the counselor, which he might have been. He was gay and kind when he wished to be. In his youth he had been one of those men who are always deceived by their wives and never by their mistresses, because they are at the same time the most disagreeable husbands and the most charming lovers in

the world. He was a connoisseur in painting. He had in his room a wonderful portrait of nobody knows who, painted by Jordaens, done in great dabs with the brush, with millions of details, in a confused manner, as if by chance. M. Gillenormand's dress was not in the fashion of Louis XV, nor even in the fashion of Louis XVI; he wore the costume of the *incroyables* of the Directory. He had thought himself quite young until then, and had kept up with the fashions. His coat was of light cloth, with broad facings, a long swallow-tail, and large steel buttons. Add to this short breeches and shoe buckles. He always carried his hands in his pockets. He said authoritatively: "The French Revolution is a mess of scamps."

II

LUKE ESPRIT

WHEN sixteen years old, one evening, at the opera, he had had the honor of being stared at, at the same time, by two beauties then mature and celebrated and besung by Voltaire, La Camargo, and La Sallé. Caught between two fires, he had made a heroic retreat toward a little danseuse, a girl named Nahenry, who was sixteen years old, like him, obscure as a cat, and with whom he fell in love. He was full of reminiscences. He would exclaim: "How pretty she was, that Guimard Guimardin Guimardinette, the last time I saw her at Long-champs, frizzled in lofty sentiments, with her curious trinkets in turquoise, her dress the color of a new-born child, and her muff in agitation!" He had worn in his youth a vest of London short, of which he talked frequently and fluently. "I was dressed like a Turk of the Levantine Levant," said he. Mme. de Boufflers, having accidentally seen him when he was twenty years old, described him as a "charming fool." He ridiculed all the names which he saw in politics or in power, finding them low and vulgar. He read the journals, the newspapers, the gazettes, as he said, stifling with bursts of laughter. "Oh!" he said, "what are these people! Corbière! Humann! Casimir Périer! those are ministers for you. I imagine I see this in a journal: 'M. Gillenormand, min-

ister.' That would be a joke. Well! they are so stupid that it would go!" He called everything freely by its name, proper or improper, and was never restrained by the presence of women. He would say coarse, obscene, and indecent things with an inexpressible tranquillity and coolness which was elegant. It was the offhand way of his time. It is worthy of remark that the age of periphrases in verse was the age of crudities in prose. His godfather had predicted that he would be a man of genius, and gave him these two significant names: Luke Esprit.

IV

AN INSPIRING CENTENARIAN

HE had taken several prizes in his youth at the college at Moulins, where he was born, and had been crowned by the hands of the Duke de Nivernais, whom he called the Duke de Nevers. Neither the Convention nor the death of Louis XVI nor Napoleon nor the return of the Bourbons had been able to efface the memory of this coronation. The Duke de Nevers was to him the great figure of the century. "What a noble, great lord," said he, "and what a fine air he had with his blue ribbon!" In M. Gillenormand's eyes Catharine II had atoned for the crime of the partition of Poland by buying the secret of the elixir of gold from Bestuchef for 3,000 rubles. Over this he grew animated. "The elixir of gold," exclaimed he, "Bestuchef's yellow dye, General Lamotte's drops, these were in the eighteenth century, at a louis for a half-ounce flask, the great remedy for the catastrophes of love, the panacea against Venus. Louis XV sent two hundred flasks to the Pope." He would have been greatly exasperated and thrown off his balance if anybody had told him that the elixir of gold was nothing but the perchloride of iron. M. Gillenormand worshiped the Bourbons and held 1789 in horror; he was constantly relating how he saved himself during the Reign of Terror, and how, if he had not had a good deal of gayety and a good deal of wit, his head would have been cut off. If any young man ventured to eulogize the Republic in his presence he turned black in the face and was angry enough to faint.

Sometimes he would allude to his ninety years of age, and say: "I really hope that I will not see ninety-three twice." At other times he intimated to his people that he intended to live one hundred years.

V

BASQUE AND NICOLETTE

HE had his theories. Here is one of them: "When a man passionately loves women, and has a wife of his own for whom he cares but little, ugly, cross, legitimate, fond of asserting her rights, roosting on the code and jealous on occasions, he has but one way to get out of it and keep the peace—that is, to let his wife have the purse-strings. This abdication makes him free. The wife keeps herself busy then, devotes herself to handling specie, verdigrises her fingers, takes charge of the breeding of the tenants, the bringing up of the farmers, convokes lawyers, presides over notaries, harangues justices, visits pettifoggers, follows up lawsuits, writes out leases, dictates contracts, feels herself sovereign, sells, buys, regulates, promises and compromises, binds and cancels, cedes and concedes and retrocedes, arranges, deranges, economizes, wastes; she does foolish things, a magisterial and personal pleasure, and this consoles her. While her husband disdains her, she has the satisfaction of ruining her husband." This theory M. Gillenormand had applied to himself, and it had become his history. His wife, the second one, had administered his fortune in such wise that there remained to M. Gillenormand, when one fine day he found himself a widower, just enough to obtain, by turning almost everything into an annuity, an income of 15,000 francs, three-quarters of which would expire with himself. He had no hesitation, little troubled with the care of leaving an inheritance. Moreover, he had seen that patrimonies met with adventures, and, for example, became national property; he had been present at the avatars of the consolidated thirds, and he had little faith in the ledger. "Rue Quincampoix for all that!" said he. His house in Rue des Filles du Calvaire, we have said, belonged to him. He had two domestics, "a male and a female." When a domestic entered his service M. Gillenor-

mand rebaptized him. He gave to the men the name of their province: Nîmois, Comtois, Poitevin, Picard. His last valet was a big, pursy, wheezy man of fifty-five, incapable of running twenty steps, but as he was born at Bayonne M. Gillenormand called him Basque. As for female servants, they were all called Nicolette in his house (even Magnon, who will reappear as we proceed). One day a proud cook, with a blue sash, of the lofty race of porters, presented herself. "How much do you want a month?" asked M. Gillenormand. "Thirty francs." "What is your name?" "Olympie." "You shall have fifty francs and your name shall be Nicolette."

VI

IN WHICH WE SEE LA MAGNON AND HER TWO LITTLE ONES

AT M. Gillenormand's, grief was translated into anger; he was furious at being in despair. He had every prejudice, and took every license. One of the things of which he made up his external relief and his internal satisfaction was, we have just indicated, that he was still a youthful gallant, and that he passed for such energetically. He called this having "royal renown." His royal renown sometimes attracted singular presents. One day there was brought to his house in a basket, something like an oyster basket, a big boy, new-born, crying like the deuce, and duly wrapped in swaddling clothes, which a servant-girl turned away six months before attributed to him. M. Gillenormand was at that time fully eighty-four years old. Indignation and clamor on the part of the by-standers. And who did this bold wench think would believe this? What effrontery! What an abominable calumny! M. Gillenormand, however, manifested no anger. He looked upon the bundle with the amiable smile of a man who is flattered by a calumny, and said, aside: "Well, what? What is it? What is the matter there? What have we here? You are in a pretty state of amazement, and, indeed, seem like any ignorant people. The Duke d'Angoulême, natural son of his majesty Charles IX, married at eighty-five a little hussy of fifteen; M. Virginal, Marquis d'Alhuye, brother of Cardinal

de Sourdis, Archbishop of Bordeaux, at eighty-three, had, by a chambermaid of the wife of President Jacquin, a son, a true-love son, who was a Knight of Malta, and knighted Councilor of State; one of the great men of this century, Abbé Tabarand, was the son of a man eighty-seven years old. These things are anything but uncommon. And then the Bible! Upon that, I declare that this little gentleman is not mine. But take care of him. It is not his fault." This process was too easy. The creature, she whose name was Magnon, made him a second present the year after. It was a boy again. This time M. Gillenormand capitulated. He sent the two brats back to the mother, engaging to pay eighty francs a month for their support, upon condition that the said mother should not begin again. He added: "I wish the mother to treat them well. I will come to see them from time to time." Which he did. He had had a brother, a priest, who had been for thirty-three years rector of the Academy of Poitiers and who died at seventy-nine. "I lost him young," said he. This brother, of whom hardly a memory is left, was a quiet miser, who, being a priest, felt obliged to give alms to the poor whom he met, but never gave them anything more than coppers or worn-out sous, finding thus the means of going to hell by the road to paradise. As to M. Gillenormand, the elder, he made no trade of almsgiving, but gave willingly and nobly. He was benevolent, abrupt, charitable, and had he been rich his inclination would have been to be magnificent. He wished that all that concerned him should be done in a large way, even rascalities. One day, having been swindled in an inheritance by a business man, in a gross and palpable manner, he uttered this solemn exclamation: "Fie! this is not decent! I am really ashamed of these petty cheats. Everything is degenerate in this century, even the rascals. 'Sdeath! this is not the way to rob a man like me. I am robbed as if in a wood, but meanly robbed. *Silvæ sint consule dignæ!*" He had had, we have said, two wives; by the first a daughter, who had remained unmarried, and by the second another daughter, who died when about thirty years old, and who had married for love, or luck, or otherwise, a soldier of fortune, who had served in the armies of the Republic and the Empire, had won the cross

at Austerlitz and been made colonel at Waterloo. "This is the disgrace of my family," said the old bourgeois. He took a great deal of snuff and had a peculiar skill in ruffling his lace frill with the back of his hand. He had very little belief in God.

VII

RULE: NEVER RECEIVE ANYBODY EXCEPT IN THE EVENING

SUCH was M. Luke Esprit Gillenormand, who had not lost his hair, which was rather gray than white, and always combed in dog's-ears. To sum up, and with all this, a venerable man.

He was of the eighteenth century, frivolous and great.

In 1814, and in the early years of the Restoration, M. Gillenormand, who was still young—he was only seventy-four—had lived in the Faubourg Saint Germain, Rue Servandoni, near Saint Sulpice. He had retired to the Marais only upon retiring from society after his eighty years were fully accomplished.

And in retiring from society he had walled himself up in his habits, the principal one, in which he was invariable, was to keep his door absolutely closed by day and never to receive anybody whatever, on any business whatever, except in the evening. He dined at five o'clock; then his door was open. This was the custom of his century, and he would not swerve from it. "The day is vulgar," said he, "and only deserves closed shutters. People who are anybody light up their wit when the zenith lights up its stars." And he barricaded himself against everybody, were it even the king. The old elegance of his time.

VIII

TWO DO NOT MAKE A PAIR

AS to the two daughters of M. Gillenormand, we have just spoken of them. They were born ten years apart. In their youth they resembled each other very little; and in character, as well as in countenance, were as far from being sisters as possible. The younger was a cheerful soul, attracted toward everything that is bright,

busy with flowers, poetry, and music, carried away into the glories of space, enthusiastic, ethereal, affianced from childhood in the ideal to a dim, heroic figure. The elder had also her chimera; in the azure depth she saw a contractor, some good, coarse commissary, very rich, a husband splendidly stupid, a million-made man, or even a préfet; receptions at the préfecture, an usher of the antechamber, with the chain on his neck, official balls, harangues at the mayor's, to be *Mme. la Préfete*, this whirled in her imagination. The two sisters wandered thus, each in her own fancy, when they were young girls. Both had wings, one like an angel, the other like a goose.

No ambition is fully realized, here below at least. No paradise becomes terrestrial at the period in which we live. The younger had married the man of her dreams, but she was dead. The elder was not married.

At the moment she makes her entry into the story which we are relating she was an old piece of virtue, an incombustible prude, had one of the sharpest noses and one of the most obtuse minds which could be discovered. A characteristic incident. Outside of the immediate family nobody had ever known her first name. She was called "Mdlle. Gillenormand the elder."

In cant Mdlle. Gillenormand the elder could have given odds to an English miss. She was immodestly modest. She had one frightful reminiscence in her life: one day a man had seen her garter.

Age had only increased this pitiless modesty. Her dress front was never thick enough and never rose high enough. She multiplied hooks and pins where nobody thought of looking. The peculiarity of prudery is to multiply sentinels in proportion as the fortress is less threatened.

However, explain who can these ancient mysteries of innocence, she allowed herself to be kissed without displeasure by an officer of lancers who was her grand-nephew and whose name was Théodule.

Spite of this favored lancer, the title "Prude," under which we have classed her, fitted her absolutely. Mdlle. Gillenormand was a kind of twilight soul. Prudery is half a virtue and half a vice.

To prudery she added bigotry, a suitable lining. She was of the fraternity of the Virgin, wore a white veil on

certain feast days, muttered special prayers, revered "the holy blood," venerated "the sacred heart," remained for hours in contemplation before an old-fashioned Jesuit altar in a chapel closed to the vulgar faithful, and let her soul fly away among the little marble clouds and along the grand rays of gilded wood.

She had a chapel friend, an old maid like herself, called Mdlle. Vaubois, who was perfectly stupid, and in comparison with whom Mdlle. Gillenormand had the happiness of being an eagle. Beyond her Agnus Deis and her "Ave Marias," Mdlle. Vaubois had no light except upon the different modes of making sweetmeats. Mdlle. Vaubois, perfect in her kind, was the ermine of stupidity without a single stain of intelligence.

We must say that in growing old Mdlle. Gillenormand had rather gained than lost. This is the case with passive natures. She had never been peevish, which is a relative goodness; and then years wear off angles, and the softening of time had come upon her. She was sad with an obscure sadness of which she had not the secret herself. There was in her whole person the stupor of a life ended but never commenced.

She kept her father's house. M. Gillenormand had his daughter with him as we have seen Mgr. Bienvenu have his sister with him. These households of an old man and an old maid are not rare, and always have the touching aspect of two feeblenesses leaning upon each other.

There was besides in the house between this old maid and this old man, a child, a little boy, always trembling and mute before M. Gillenormand. M. Gillenormand never spoke to this child but with stern voice, and sometimes with uplifted cane: "Here! monsieur—rascal, black-guard, come here! Answer me, rogue! Let me see you, scapegrace!" etc. He idolized him.

It was his grandson. We shall see this child again.

BOOK THIRD—THE GRANDFATHER AND THE GRANDSON

I

AN OLD SALON

WHEN M. Gillenormand lived in the Rue Servandoni he frequented several very fine and very noble salons. Although a bourgeois, M. Gillenormand was welcome. As he was twice witty, first with his own wit, then with the wit which was attributed to him, he was even sought after and lionized. He went nowhere save on condition of ruling there. There are men who at any price desire influence and to attract the attention of others; where they can not be oracles they make themselves laughing-stocks. M. Gillenormand was not of this nature; his dominance in the royalist salons which he frequented cost him none of his self-respect. He was an oracle everywhere. It was his fortune to have as an antagonist M. de Bonald, and even M. Bengy-Puy-Vallée.

About 1817, he always spent two afternoons a week at a house in his neighborhood, in the Rue Férou, that of the Baroness of T——, a worthy and venerable lady, whose husband had been, under Louis XVI, French ambassador at Berlin. The Baron of T., who, during his life, had devoted himself passionately to ecstasies and magnetic visions, died in the emigration, ruined, leaving no fortune but ten manuscript volumes, bound in red morocco with gilt edges, of very curious memoirs upon Mesmer and his trough. Mme. de T—— had not published the memoirs from motives of dignity, and supported herself on a small income, which had survived the flood nobody knows how. Mme. de T—— lived far from the court—"a very mixed society," said she—in a noble, proud, and poor isolation. A few friends gathered about her widow's hearth twice a week, and this constituted a pure royalist salon. They took tea and uttered, as the wind set toward elegy or dithyrambic, groans or cries of horror over the century, over the charter, over the Bonapartists, over the prostitution

of the blue ribbon to bourgeois, over the Jacobinism of Louis XVIII; and they amused themselves in whispers with hopes which rested upon Monsieur since Charles X.

They hailed the vulgar songs, in which Napoleon was called "Nicolas," with transports of joy. Duchesses, the most delicate and the most charming women in the world, went into ecstasies over couplets like this addressed "to the federals":

Renforcez dans vos culottes
Le bout d'chems' qui vous pend.
Qu'on n' dis pas qu' les patriotes,
Ont arbore l'drapeau blanc!

They amused themselves with puns which they thought terrible, with innocent plays upon words which they supposed to be venomous, with quatrains and even distiches; thus upon the Dessolles ministry, a moderate cabinet, of which MM. Decazes and Deserre were members:

Pour raffermir le trone ébranlé sur sa base,
Il faut changer de sol, et de se re et de case.

Or sometimes they drew up the list of the chamber of peers, "chamber abominably Jacobin," and in this list they arranged the names so as to make, for example, phrases like this: "*Damas, Sabran, Gouvion, Saint Cyr.*" All this gayly.

In this little world they parodied the Revolution. They had some inclinations or other which sharpened the same anger in the inverse sense. They sang their little *ca ira*:

Ah! ca ira! ca ira! ca ira!
Les Buonapartis' à la lanterne!

Songs are like the guillotine; they cut indifferently; to-day this head, to-morrow that. It is only a variation.

In the Fauldès affair, which belongs to this time, 1816, they took sides with Bastide and Jausion, because Fauldès was a "Bonapartist." They called the liberals "the brothers and friends"; this was the highest degree of insult.

Like certain menageries, the Baroness de T——'s salon had two lions. One was M. Gillenormand, the other was Count de Lamothe Valois, of whom it was whispered, with a sort of consideration: "Do you know? He is the

Lamothe of the necklace affair." Partisans have such singular amnesties as these.

We will add also: "Among the bourgeois positions of honor are lowered by too easy intercourse; you must take care whom you receive; just as there is a loss of caloric in the neighborhood of those who are cold, there is a diminution of consideration in the approach of people who are despised. The old highest society held itself above this law as it did above all others. Marigny, La Pompadour's brother, is a visitor of the Prince de Soubise. Although? no, because. Du Barry, godfather of La Vaubernier, is very welcome at the Marshal de Richelieu's. This society is Olympus. Mercury and the Prince de Gueménée are at home there. A thief is admitted, provided he be a lord.

The Count de Lamothe, who, in 1815, was a man of seventy-five, was remarkable for nothing save his silent and sententious air, his cold, angular face, his perfectly polished manners, his coat buttoned up to his cravat and his long legs always crossed in long, loose pantaloons of the color of burned sienna. His face was of the color of his pantaloons.

This M. de Lamothe was "esteemed" in this salon on account of his "celebrity"; and, strange to say, but true, on account of the name of Valois.

As to M. Gillenormand, his consideration was absolutely for himself alone. He made authority. He had, sprightly as he was, and without detriment to his gayety, a certain fashion of being, which was imposing, worthy, honorable, and genteelly lofty; and his great age added to it. A man is not a century for nothing. Years place at last a venerable crown upon a head.

He gave, moreover, some of those repartees which certainly have in them the genuine sparkle. Thus, when the King of Prussia, after having restored Louis XVIII, came to make him a visit under the name of Count de Ruppin, he was received by the descendant of Louis XIV somewhat like a Marquis of Brandenburg, and with the most delicate impertinence. M. Gillenormand approved this. "All kings who are not the King of France," said he, "are kings of a province." The following question and answer were uttered one day in his presence: "What is the sentence of the editor of the 'Courier Française'?"

"To be hung up for a while." "*Up* is superfluous," observed M. Gillenormand. Sayings of this kind make a position for a man.

At an anniversary "*Te Deum*" for the return of the Bourbons, seeing M. de Talleyrand pass, he said: "There goes his Excellency, the Bad!"

M. Gillenormand was usually accompanied by his daughter, this long mademoiselle, then past forty, and seeming fifty, and by a beautiful little boy of seven, white, rosy, fresh-looking, with happy and trustful eyes, who never appeared in this salon without hearing a buzz about him: "How pretty he is! What a pity! poor child!" This child was the boy to whom we have just alluded. They called him "poor child" because his father was "a brigand of the Loire."

This brigand of the Loire was M. Gillenormand's son-in-law, already mentioned, and whom M. Gillenormand called "the disgrace of his family."

II

ONE OF THE RED SPECTRES OF THAT TIME

WHOEVER, at that day, had passed through the little city of Vernon, and walked over that beautiful monumental bridge which will be very soon replaced, let us hope, by some horrid wire bridge, would have noticed, as his glance fell from the top of the parapet, a man of about fifty, with a leather casque on his head, dressed in pantaloons and waistcoat of coarse, gray cloth, to which something yellow was stitched, which had been a red ribbon, shod in wooden shoes, browned by the sun, his face almost black and his hair almost white, a large scar upon his forehead extending down his cheek, bent, bowed down, older than his years, walking nearly every day with a spade and a pruning-knife in his hand in one of those walled compartments in the vicinity of the bridge, which, like a chain of terraces, border the left bank of the Seine—charming inclosures full of flowers, of which one would say, if they were much larger, they are gardens; and, if they were a little smaller, they are bouquets. All these inclosures are bounded by the river on one side and by a

house on the other. The man in the waistcoat and wooden shoes, of whom we have just spoken, lived, about the year 1817, in the smallest of these inclosures and the humblest of these houses. He lived there solitary and alone, in silence and in poverty, with a woman who was neither young nor old, neither beautiful nor ugly, neither peasant nor bourgeois, who waited upon him. The square of earth which he called his garden was celebrated in the town for the beauty of the flowers which he cultivated in it. Flowers were his occupation.

By dint of labor, perseverance, attention, and pails of water, he had succeeded in creating after the Creator, and had invented certain tulips and dahlias which seemed to have been forgotten by nature. He was ingenious; he anticipated Soulange Bodin in the formation of little clumps of heather earth for the culture of rare and precious shrubs from America and China. By break of day, in summer, he was in his walks, digging, pruning, weeding, watering, walking in the midst of his flowers with an air of kindness, sadness, and gentleness, sometimes dreamy and motionless for whole hours, listening to the song of a bird in a tree, the prattling of a child in a house, or oftener with his eyes fixed on some drop of dew at the end of a spear of grass, of which the sun was making a carbuncle. His table was very frugal, and he drank more milk than wine. An urchin would make him yield; his servant scolded him. He was timid—so much so as to seem unsociable; he rarely went out, and saw nobody but the poor, who rapped at his window, and his curé, Abbé Mabeuf, a good old man. Still, if any of the inhabitants of the city, or strangers, whoever they might be, curious to see his tulips and roses, knocked at his house, he opened his door with a smile. This was the brigand of the Loire.

Whoever, at the same time, had read the military memoirs, the biographies, the "Moniteur," and the bulletins of the grand army, would have been struck by a name which appears rather often—the name of George Pontmercy. When quite young this George Pontmercy was a soldier in the regiment of Saintonge. The Revolution broke out. The regiment of Saintonge was in the army of the Rhine. For the old regiments of the monarchy kept their province names even after the fall of the mon-

archy, and were not brigaded until 1794. Pontmercy fought at Spire, at Worms, at Neustadt, at Turkheim, at Alzey, at Mayence, where he was one of the 200 who formed Houchard's rearguard. He, with eleven others, held their ground against the Prince of Hesse's corps behind the old rampart of Andernach, and only fell back upon the bulk of the army when the hostile cannon had effected a breach from the top of the parapet to the slope of the glacis. He was under Kleber at Marchiennes, and at the battle of Mont Palissel, where he had his arm broken by a musket-ball. Then he passed to the Italian frontier, and he was one of the thirty grenadiers who defended Colonel di Tende with Joubert. Joubert was made adjutant-general and Pontmercy second lieutenant. Pontmercy was by the side of Berthier in the midst of the storm of balls on that day of Lodi of which Bonaparte said: "Berthier was cannoner, cavalier, and grenadier." He saw his old general, Joubert, fall at Novi, at the moment when, with uplifted sword, he was crying: "Forward!" Being embarked with his company, through the necessities of the campaign, in a pinnace, which was on the way from Genoa to some little port on the coast, he fell into a wasp's nest of seven or eight English vessels. The Genoese captain wanted to throw the guns into the sea, hide the soldiers in the hold, and slip through in the dark like a merchantman. Pontmercy had the colors seized to the halcyards of the ensign-staff, and passed proudly under the guns of the British frigates. Fifty miles further on, his boldness increasing, he attacked with his pinnace and captured a large English transport carrying troops to Sicily, so loaded with men and horses that the vessel was full to the hatches. In 1805, he was in that division of Malher which captured Günzburg from the Archduke Ferdinand. At Weltingen he received in his arms, under a shower of balls, Colonel Maupetit, who was mortally wounded at the head of the 9th dragoons. He distinguished himself at Austerlitz in that wonderful march in echelon under the enemy's fire. When the cavalry of the Russian Imperial Guard crushed a battalion of the 4th of the line, Pontmercy was one of those who avenged the repulse and overthrew the guard. The Emperor gave him the cross. Pontmercy successively saw Wurmser made prisoner in

Mantua, Melas in Alexandria, and Mack in Ulm. He was in the 8th corps of the grand army, which Mortier commanded and which took Hamburg. Then he passed into the 55th of the line, which was the old Flanders regiment. At Eylau he was in the churchyard where the heroic Capt. Louis Hugo, uncle of the author of this book, sustained alone with his company of eighty-three men, for two hours, the whole effort of the enemy's army. Pontmercy was one of three who came out of that churchyard alive. He was at Friedland. Then he saw Moscow, then the Beresina, then Lutzen, Bautzen, Dresden, Wachau, Leipsic, and the defiles of Gelnhausen, then Montmirail, Château Thierry, Craon, the banks of the Marne, the banks of the Aisne, and the formidable position at Laon. At Arnay le Duc, a captain, he sabred ten Cossacks, and saved, not his general, but his corporal. He was wounded on that occasion, and twenty-seven splinters were extracted from his left arm alone. Eight days before the capitulation of Paris he exchanged with a comrade and entered the cavalry. He had what was called, under the old régime, "the double hand," that is to say, equal skill in managing, as a soldier, the sabre or the musket; as an officer, a squadron or a battalion. It is this skill, perfected by military education, which gives rise to certain special arms, the dragoons, for instance, who are both cavalry and infantry. He accompanied Napoleon to the Island of Elba. At Waterloo he led a squadron of cuirassiers in Dubois's brigade. He it was who took the colors from the Lunenburg battalion. He carried the colors to the Emperor's feet. He was covered with blood. He had received, in seizing the colors, a sabre stroke across his face. The Emperor, well pleased, cried to him: "You are a colonel, you are a baron, you are an officer of the Legion of Honor!" Pontmercy answered: "Sire, I thank you for my widow." An hour afterward he fell in the ravine of Ohain. Now, who was this George Pontmercy? He was that very brigand of the Loire.

We have already seen something of his history. After Waterloo Pontmercy, drawn out, as will be remembered, from the sunken road of Ohain, succeeded in regaining the army, and was passed along from ambulance to ambulance to the cantonments of the Loire.

The Restoration put him on half-pay, then sent him to a residence, that is to say, under surveillance, at Vernon. The King, Louis XVIII, ignoring all that had been done in the one hundred days, recognized neither his position of officer of the Legion of Honor nor his rank of colonel nor his title of baron. He, on his part, neglected no opportunity to sign himself "Colonel Baron Pontmercy." He had only one old blue coat, and he never went out without putting on the rosette of an officer of the Legion of Honor. The procureur du roi notified him that he would be prosecuted for "illegally" wearing this decoration. When this notice was given to him by a friendly intermediary Pontmercy answered, with a bitter smile: "I do not know whether it is that I no longer understand French, or you no longer speak it; but the fact is I do not understand you." Then he went out every day for a week with his rosette. Nobody dared to disturb him. Two or three times the Minister of War or the general commanding the department wrote to him with this address: "M. Commandant Pontmercy." He returned the letters unopened. At the same time Napoleon, at St. Helena, was treating Sir Hudson Lowe's missives, addressed to "General Bonaparte," in the same way. Pontmercy at last—excuse the word—came to have in his mouth the same saliva as his Emperor.

So, too, there were in Rome a few Carthaginian soldiers taken prisoners who refused to bow to Flaminius, and who had a little of Hannibal's soul.

One morning he met the procureur du roi in one of the streets of Vernon, went up to him and said: "M. Procureur du Roi, am I allowed to wear my scar?"

He had nothing but his very scanty half-pay as chief of squadron. He hired the smallest house he could find in Vernon. He lived there alone; how we have just seen. Under the Empire, between two wars, he had found time to marry Mdle. Gillenormand. The old bourgeois, who really felt outraged, consented with a sigh, saying: "The greatest families are forced to it." In 1815, Mme. Pontmercy, an admirable woman in every respect, noble and rare, and worthy of her husband, died, leaving a child. This child would have been the colonel's joy in his solitude, but the grandfather had imperiously demanded his

grandson, declaring that, unless he were given up to him, he would disinherit him. The father yielded for the sake of the little boy, and, not being able to have his child, he set about loving flowers.

He had, moreover, given up everything, making no movement nor conspiring with others. He divided his thoughts between the innocent things he was doing and the grand things he had done. He passed his time hoping for a pink or remembering Austerlitz.

M. Gillenormand had no intercourse with his son-in-law. The colonel was to him "a bandit," and he was to the colonel "a blockhead." M. Gillenormand never spoke of the colonel unless sometimes to make mocking allusions to "his barony." It was expressly understood that Pontmercy should never endeavor to see his son or to speak to him, under pain of the boy being turned away and disinherited. To the Gillenormands Pontmercy was pestiferous. They intended to bring up the child to their liking. The colonel did wrong, perhaps, to accept these conditions, but he submitted to them, thinking that he was doing right and sacrificing himself alone.

The inheritance from the grandfather, Gillenormand, was a small affair, but the inheritance from Mdle. Gillenormand the elder was considerable. This aunt, who had remained single, was very rich from the maternal side, and the son of her sister was her natural heir. The child, whose name was Marius, knew that he had a father, but nothing more. Nobody spoke a word to him about him. However, in the society into which his grandfather took him, the whisperings, the hints, the winks, enlightened the little boy's mind at length; he finally comprehended something of it, and as he naturally imbibed, by a sort of infiltration and slow penetration, the ideas and opinions which formed, so to say, the air he breathed, he came little by little to think of his father only with shame and with a closed heart.

While he was thus growing up, every two or three months the colonel would escape, come furtively to Paris, like a fugitive from justice breaking his ban, and go to St. Sulpice, at the hour when Aunt Gillenormand took Marius to mass. There, trembling lest the aunt should turn round, concealed behind a pillar, motionless, not dar-

ing to breathe, he saw his child. The scarred veteran was afraid of the old maid.

From this, in fact, came his connection with the curé of Vernon, Abbé Mabeuf.

This worthy priest was the brother of a warden of St. Sulpice, who had several times noticed this man gazing upon his child, and the scar on his cheek and the big tear in his eyes. This man, who had so really the appearance of a man, and who wept like a woman, had attracted the warden's attention. This face remained in his memory. One day, having gone to Vernon to see his brother, he met Colonel Pontmercy on the bridge, and recognized the man of St. Sulpice. The warden spoke of it to the curé, and the two, under some pretext, made the colonel a visit. This visit led to others. The colonel, who at first was very reserved, finally unbosomed himself, and the curé and the warden came to know the whole story, and how Pontmercy was sacrificing his own happiness to the future of his child. The result was that the curé felt a veneration and tenderness for him, and the colonel, on his part, felt an affection for the curé. And, moreover, when it happens that both are sincere and good, nothing will mix and amalgamate more easily than an old priest and an old soldier. In reality, they are the same kind of man. One has devoted himself to his country upon earth, the other to his country in heaven; there is no other difference.

Twice a year, on the 1st of January and on St. George's day, Marius wrote filial letters to his father, which his aunt dictated, and which, one would have said, were copied from some complete letter-writer; this was all that M. Gilenormand allowed; and the father answered with very tender letters, which the grandfather thrust into his pocket without reading.

III

REQUIESCAT

THE salon of Mme. de T—— was all that Marius Pontmercy knew of the world. It was the only opening by which he could look out into life. This opening was sombre, and through this porthole there came more cold than warmth, more night than day. The child, who was

nothing but joy and light on entering this strange world, in a little while became sad, and, what is still more unusual at his age, grave. Surrounded by all these imposing and singular persons, he looked about him with a serious astonishment. Everything united to increase his amazement. There were in Mme. de T——'s salon some very venerable, noble old ladies, whose names were Mathan, Noah, Lévis (which was pronounced Lévi), Cambis (which was pronounced Cambyse). These antique faces and these biblical names mingled in the child's mind with his Old Testament, which he was learning by heart, and when they were all present, seated in a circle about a dying fire, dimly lighted by a green-shaded lamp, with their stern profiles, their gray or white hair, their long dresses of another age, in which mournful colors only could be distinguished, at rare intervals dropping a few words which were at once majestic and austere, the little Marius looked upon them with startled eyes, thinking that he saw, not women, but patriarchs and magi; not real beings, but phantoms.

Among these phantoms were scattered several priests, who frequented this old salon, and a few gentlemen; the Marquis de Sass—, secretary of commands to Mme. de Berry; the Viscount de Val—, who published some monorhymed odes under the pseudonym of "Charles Antoine"; the Prince de Beauff—, who, quite young, was turning gray, and had a pretty and witty wife, whose dress of scarlet velvet, with gold trimmings, worn very low in the neck, startled this darkness; the Marquis de C—— d'E——, the man in all France who best understood "proportioned politeness"; the Count d'Am—, the good man with the benevolent chin; and the Chevalier de Port de Guy, a frequenter of the library of the Louvre, called the king's cabinet. M. de Port de Guy, bald and rather old than aged, related that in 1793, when sixteen years of age, he was sent to the galleys as "refractory," and chained with an octogenarian, the Bishop of Mirepoix, refractory also, but as a priest, while he was so as a soldier. This was at Toulon. Their business was to go to the scaffold at night, and gather up the heads and bodies of those that had been guillotined during the day; they carried these dripping trunks upon their backs, and their red galley capes were incrustated behind with blood, dry in the morning, wet at

night. These tragic anecdotes abounded in Mme. de T——'s salon; and by dint of cursing Marat, they came to applaud Trestaillon. A few deputies of the undiscoverable kind played their whist there—M. Thibaud du Chaland, M. Lemarchant de Gomicourt, and the celebrated jester of the Right, M. Cornet Dincourt. The Bailli de Ferrette, with his short breeches and his thin legs, sometimes passed through this salon on the way to M. de Talleyrand's. He had been the pleasure companion of the Count de Artois, and, reversing Aristotle cowering before Campaspe, he had made La Guimard walk on all fours, and in this manner shown to the centuries a philosopher avenged by a bailli.

As for the priests, there was Abbé Halma, the same to whom M. Larose, his assistant on *La Foudre*, said: "Pshaw! Who is there that is not fifty years old? A few greenhorns, perhaps." Abbé Letourneur, the king's preacher; Abbé Frayssinous, who was not yet either count, bishop, minister, or peer, and who wore an old cassock short of buttons, and Abbé Keravenant, curé de St. Germain des Prés. Besides these the Pope's nuncio, at that time Mgr. Macchi, Archbishop of Nisibi, afterward cardinal, remarkable for his long, pensive nose, and another monseigneur, with the following titles: Abbate Palmieri, domestic prelate, one of the seven participating prothonotaries of the holy see, canon of the insignia of the Liberian basilicate, advocate of the saints, *postulatore Dei Santi*, which relates to the business of canonization and signifies very nearly "master of requests for the section of paradise." Finally, two cardinals, M. de la Luzerne and M. de Cl— T——. The Cardinal de la Luzerne was a writer, and was to have, some years later, the honor of signing articles in the *Conservateur* side by side with Châteaubriand; M. de Cl— T—— was Archbishop of Toul—, and often came to rusticate at Paris with his nephew, the Marquis of T——, who had been minister of marine and of war. The Cardinal de Cl— T—— was a little, lively old man, showing his red stockings under his turned-up cassock; his peculiarities were hate of the Encyclopedia and desperate play at billiards, and people who at that time, on summer evenings, passed along the Rue M——, where the Hôtel de Cl— T—— was at that time, stopped to hear the

clicking of the balls and the sharp voice of the cardinal crying to his fellow-conclavist, Mgr. Cottret, Bishop *in partibus* of Carysta: "Mark, abbé! I have carromed." The Cardinal de Cl— T—— had been brought to Mme. de T——'s by his most intimate friend, M. de Roquelaure, formerly Bishop of Senlis and one of the forty. M. de Roquelaure was noteworthy for his tall stature and his assiduity at the Academy; through the glass door of the hall, near the library, in which the French Academy then held its sessions, the curious could every Friday gaze upon the old Bishop of Senlis, usually standing, freshly powdered, with violet stockings, and turning his back to the door, apparently to show his little collar to better advantage. All these ecclesiastics, though for the most part courtiers as well as churchmen, added to the importance of the T—— salon, the lordly aspect of which was emphasized by five peers of France—the Marquis de Vib—, the Marquis de Tal—, the Marquis d'Herb—, the Viscount Damb—, and the Duke de Val—. This Duke de Val—, although Prince de Mon—, that is to say, a foreign sovereign prince, had so high an idea of France and the peerage that he saw everything through their medium. He it was who said: "The cardinals are the French peers of Rome, the lords are the French peers of England." Finally, since in this century the Revolution must make itself felt everywhere, this feudal salon was, as we have said, ruled by a bourgeois. M. Gillenormand reigned there.

There was the essence and the quintessence of Parisian legitimatist society. People of renown, even though royalists, were held in quarantine. There is always anarchy in renown. Châteaubriand, had he entered there, would have had the same effect as Père Duchêne. Some repentant backsliders, however, penetrated by sufferance into this orthodox world. Count Beug— was received there by favor.

The "noble" salons of the present day bear no resemblance to those salons. The Faubourg St. Germain of the present day smells of heresy. The royalists of this age are demagogues, we must say it to their praise.

At Mme. de T——'s, the society being superior, there was exquisite and haughty taste under a full bloom of politeness. Their manners comported with all sorts of invol-

untary refinements, which were the ancient régime itself, buried, but living. Some of these peculiarities, in language especially, seemed grotesque. Superficial observers would have taken for provincial what was only ancient. They called a woman *madame la générale*. *Mme. la colonelle* was not entirely out of use. The charming Mme. de Léon, in memory, doubtless, of the Duchesses de Longueville and de Chevreuse, preferred this appellation to her title of princess. The Marchioness of Créquy also called herself *madame la colonelle*.

It was this little lofty world which invented at the Tuileries the refinement of always saying when speaking to the king in person, "the king," in the third person, and never "your majesty," the title "your majesty" having been "sullied by the usurper."

Facts and men were judged there. They ridiculed the century, which dispensed with comprehending it. They assisted one another in astonishment. Each communicated to the rest the quantity of light he had. Methuselah instructed Epimenides. The deaf kept the blind informed. They declared, that the time since Coblenz had not elapsed. Just as Louis XVIII was, by the grace of God, in the twenty-fifth year of his reign, the Emigrés were, in reality, in the twenty-fifth year of their youth.

All was harmonious; nothing was too much alive; speech was hardly a breath; the journal, suiting the salon, seemed a papyrus. There were young people there, but they were slightly dead. In the ante-chamber the liveries were old. These personages, completely out of date, were served by domestics of the same kind. Altogether they had the appearance of having lived a long time ago, and of being obstinate with the sepulchre. Conserve, conservatism, conservative, was nearly all the dictionary; to be in good odor was the point. There was, in fact, something aromatic in the opinions of these venerable groups, and their ideas smelt of Indian herbs. It was a mummy world. The masters were embalmed, the valets were stuffed.

A worthy old marchioness, a ruined Emigrée, having now but one servant, continued to say: "My people."

What was done in Mme. de T——'s parlor? They were ultra.

To be ultra—this word, although what it represents has

not perhaps disappeared—this word has now lost its meaning. Let us explain it.

To be ultra is to go beyond. It is to attack the sceptre in the name of the throne, and the mitre in the name of the altar; it is to maltreat the thing you support; it is to kick in the traces; it is to cavil at the stake for undercooking heretics; it is to reproach the idol with a lack of idolatry; it is to insult by excess of respect; it is to find in the pope too little papistry, in the king too little royalty, and too much light in the night; it is to be dissatisfied with the albatross, with snow, with the swan and the lily in the name of whiteness; it is to be the partisan of things to the point of becoming their enemy; it is to be so very pro that you are con.

The ultra spirit is a peculiar characteristic of the first phase of the Restoration.

There was never anything in history like this little while, beginning in 1814 and ending about 1820, on the advent of M. de Villèle, the practical man of the Right. These six years were an extraordinary moment; at once brilliant and gloomy, smiling and sombre, lighted as by the radiance of dawn and at the same time enveloped in the darkness of the great catastrophes which still filled the horizon, though they were slowly burying themselves in the past. There was there in that light and that shade a little world by itself, new and old, merry and sad, juvenile and senile, rubbing its eyes; nothing resembles an awakening so much as a return; a group which looked upon France whimsically and upon which France looked with irony; streets full of good old owl-marquises, returned and returning "ci-devants," astounded at everything, brave and noble gentlemen smiling at being in France and weeping over it also; delighted to see their country again, in despair at finding their Monarchy no more; the nobility of the crusades spitting upon the nobility of the Empire, that is to say, the nobility of the sword; historic races losing the meaning of history; sons of the companions of Charlemagne disdaining the companions of Napoleon. Swords, as we have said, insulted each other; the sword of Fontenoy was ridiculous and nothing but rust; the sword of Marengo was hateful and nothing but a sabre. Formerly disowned yesterday. The sense of the grand was

lost as well as the sense of the ridiculous. There was somebody who called Bonaparte Scapin. That world is no more. Nothing, we repeat, now remains of it. When we happen to draw some form from it and endeavor to make it live again in our thought it seems as strange to us as an antediluvian world. It also, in fact, has been swallowed up by a deluge. It has disappeared under two revolutions. What floods are ideas! How quickly they cover all that they are commissioned to destroy and to bury and how rapidly they create frightful abysses!

Such was the character of the salons in those far-off and simple ages when M. Martainville was wittier than Voltaire.

These salons had a literature and politics of their own. They believed in Fiévée. M. Agier gave laws to them. They criticised M. Colnet, the publicist of the bookstall of the Quai Malaquais. Napoleon was nothing but the Corsican ogre. At a later day the introduction into history of M. l'Marquis de Bonaparte, lieutenant-general of the armies of the king, was a concession to the spirit of the century.

These salons did not long maintain their purity. As early as 1818 doctrinaires began to bud out in them—a troublesome species. Their style was to be royalists and to apologize for it. Just where the ultras were proudest the doctrinaires were a little ashamed. They were witty; they were silent; their political dogmas were suitably starched with pride; they ought to have been successful. They indulged in what was, moreover, convenient, an excess of white cravat and close-buttoned coat. The fault or misfortune of the doctrinaire party was the creation of an old youth. They assumed the postures of sages. Their dream was to engraft upon an absolute and excessive principle a limited power. They opposed, and sometimes with rare intelligence, destructive liberalism by conservative liberalism. We heard them say: "Be considerate toward royalism; it has done much real service. It has brought us back tradition, worship, religion, respect. It is faithful, brave, chivalric, loving, devoted. It comes to associate, although with regret, to the new grandeur of the nation the old grandeur of the monarchy. It is wrong in not comprehending the Revolution, the Empire, glory, lib-

erty, new ideas, new generations, the century. But this wrong which it does us have we not sometimes done it the same? The Revolution, whose heirs we are, ought to comprehend all. To attack royalism is a misconception of liberalism. What a blunder and what blindness! Revolutionary France is wanting in respect for historic France; that is to say, for her mother, that is to say, for herself. After the 5th of September the nobility of the Monarchy is treated as the nobility of the Empire was treated after the 8th of July. They were unjust toward the eagle; we are unjust toward the fleur-de-lys. Must we, then, always have something to proscribe? Of what use is it to deface the crown of Louis XIV or to scratch off the escutcheon of Henry IV? We rail at M. de Vaublanc, who effaced the N's from the bridge of Jena. But what did he do? What we are doing. Bouvines belongs to us as well as Marengo. The fleurs-de-lys are ours as well as the N's. They are our patrimony. What is gained by diminishing it? We must not disown our country in the past more than in the present. Why not desire our whole history? Why not love all of France?"

This is the way in which the doctrinaires criticised and patronized royalism, which was displeased at being criticised and furious at being patronized.

The ultras marked the first period of royalism, the assemblage characterized the second. To fervency succeeded skill. Let us not prolong this sketch.

In the course of this narrative the author of this book found in his path this strange moment of contemporary history; he was obliged to glance at it in passing, and to trace some of the singular lineaments of that society now unknown. But he does it rapidly and without any bitter or derisive intention. Reminiscences, affectionate and respectful, for they relate to his mother, attach him to this period. Besides, we must say, that same little world had its greatness. We may smile at it, but we can neither despise it nor hate it. It was the France of former times.

Marius Pontmercy went like all children through various studies. When he left the hands of Aunt Gillenormand his grandfather intrusted him to a worthy professor of the purest classic innocence. This young, unfolding soul passed from a prude to a pedant. Marius had his

years at college, then he entered the law school. He was royalist, fanatical, and austere. He had little love for his grandfather, whose gayety and cynicism wounded him, and the place of his father was a dark void.

For the rest, he was an ardent but cool lad, noble, generous, proud, religious, lofty; honorable even to harshness, pure even to unsociableness.

IV

END OF THE BRIGAND

THE completion of Marius's classical studies was coincident with M. Gillenormand's retirement from the world. The old man bade farewell to the Faubourg St. Germain, and to Mme. de T——'s salon, and established himself in the Marais, at his house in the Rue des Filles du Calvaire. His servants there were, in addition to the porter, this chambermaid Nicolette, who had succeeded Magnon, and this short-winded and pursy Basque, whom we have already mentioned.

In 1827 Marius had just attained his eighteenth year. On coming in one evening he saw his grandfather with a letter in his hand.

"Marius," said M. Gillenormand, "you will set out tomorrow for Vernon."

"What for?" said Marius.

"To see your father."

Marius shuddered. He had thought of everything but this, that a day might come when he would have to see his father. Nothing could have been more unlooked for, more surprising, and, we must say, more disagreeable. It was aversion compelled to intimacy. It was no chagrin; no, it was pure drudgery.

Marius, besides his feelings of political antipathy, was convinced that his father, the sabrer, as M. Gillenormand called him in his gentler moments, did not love him; that was clear, since he had abandoned him and left him to others. Feeling that he was not loved at all, he had no love. "Nothing more natural," said he to himself.

He was so astounded that he did not question M. Gillenormand. The grandfather continued: "It appears that he is sick. He asks for you."

And after a moment of silence he added: "Start to-morrow morning. I think there is at the Cour des Fontaines a conveyance which starts at six o'clock and arrives at night. Take it. He says the case is urgent."

Then he crumpled up the letter and put it in his pocket. Marius could have started that evening and been with his father the next morning. A diligence then made the trip to Rouen from the Rue du Bouloi by night, passing through Vernon. Neither M. Gillenormand nor Marius thought of inquiring.

The next day, at dusk, Marius arrived at Vernon. Candles were just beginning to be lighted. He asked the first person he met for the "house of M. Pontmercy." For in his feelings he agreed with the Restoration, and he, too, recognized his father neither as baron nor as colonel.

The house was pointed out to him. He rang; a woman came and opened the door with a small lamp in her hand.

"M. Pontmercy?" said Marius.

The woman remained motionless.

"Is it here?" asked Marius.

The woman gave an affirmative nod of the head.

"Can I speak with him?"

The woman gave a negative sign.

"But I am his son!" resumed Marius. "He is expecting me."

"He expects you no longer," said the woman.

Then he perceived that she was in tears.

She pointed to the door of a low room; he entered.

In this room, which was lighted by a tallow candle on the mantle, there were three men, one of them standing, one on his knees and one stripped to his shirt and lying at full length upon the floor. The one upon the floor was the colonel.

The two others were a physician and a priest, who was praying.

The colonel had been three days before attacked with a brain fever. At the beginning of the sickness, having a presentiment of ill, he had written to M. Gillenormand to ask for his son. He had grown worse. On the very evening of Marius's arrival at Vernon the colonel had had a fit of delirium; he sprang out of his bed, in spite of the servant, crying: "My son has not come; I am going to

meet him!" Then he had gone out of his room and fallen upon the floor of the hall. He had just died.

The doctor and the curé had been sent for. The doctor had come too late, the curé had come too late. The son, also, had come too late.

By the dim light of the candle they could distinguish upon the cheek of the pale and prostrate colonel a big tear which had fallen from his death-stricken eye. The eye was glazed, but the tear was not dry. This tear was for his son's delay.

Marius looked upon this man, whom he saw for the first time, and for the last—this venerable and manly face, those open eyes which saw not, this white hair, those robust limbs upon which he distinguished here and there brown lines, which were sabre-cuts, and a species of red stars, which were bullet-holes. He looked upon that gigantic scar which imprinted heroism upon this face on which God had impressed goodness. He thought that this man was his father, and that this man was dead, and he remained unmoved.

The sorrow which he experienced was the sorrow which he would have felt before any other man whom he might have seen stretched out in death.

Mourning, bitter mourning, was in that room. The servant was lamenting by herself in the corner, the curé was praying, and his sobs were heard; the doctor was wiping his eyes; the corpse itself wept.

This doctor, this priest, and this woman looked at Marius through their affliction without saying a word; it was he who was the stranger. Marius, too little moved, felt ashamed and embarrassed at his attitude. He had his hat in his hand; he let it fall to the floor, to make them believe that grief deprived him of strength to hold it.

At the same time he felt something like remorse, and he despised himself for acting thus. But was it his fault? He did not love his father, indeed!

The colonel left nothing. The sale of his furniture hardly paid for his burial. The servant found a scrap of paper which she handed to Marius. It contained this, in the handwriting of the colonel:

For my Son: The Emperor made me a baron upon the battlefield of Waterloo. Since the Restoration contests this title, which I have

bought with my blood, my son will take it and bear it. I need not say that he will be worthy of it.

On the back the colonel added:

At the same battle of Waterloo a sergeant saved my life. This man's name is Thenardier. Not long ago, I believe, he was keeping a little tavern in a village in the suburbs of Paris—at Chelles or at Montfermeil. If my son meets him, he will do Thenardier all the service he can.

Not from duty toward his father, but on account of that vague respect for death which is always so imperious in the heart of man, Marius took his paper and pressed it.

No trace remained of the colonel. M. Gillenormand had his sword and uniform sold to a second-hand dealer. The neighbors stripped the garden and carried off the rare flowers. The other plants became briery and scraggy and died.

Marius remained only forty-eight hours at Vernon. After the burial he returned to Paris and went back to his law, thinking no more of his father than if he had never lived. In two days the colonel had been buried, and in three days forgotten.

Marius wore crape on his hat. That was all.

V

THE UTILITY OF GOING TO MASS, TO BECOME REVOLUTIONARY

MARIUS had preserved the religious habits of his childhood. One Sunday he had gone to hear Mass at St. Sulpice, at this same chapel of the Virgin to which his aunt took him when he was a little boy, and, being that day more absent-minded and dreamy than usual, he took his place behind a pillar and knelt down, without noticing it, before a Utrecht velvet chair, on the back of which this name was written: "M. Mabeuf, churchwarden." The Mass had hardly commenced when an old man presented himself and said to Marius: "Monsieur, this is my place."

Marius moved away readily, and the old man took his chair.

After Mass Marius remained absorbed in thought a few

steps distant; the old man approached him again and said: "I beg your pardon, monsieur, for having disturbed you a little while ago, and for disturbing you again now, but you must have thought me impertinent, and I must explain myself."

"Monsieur," said Marius, "it is unnecessary."

"Yes!" resumed the old man; "I do not wish you to have a bad opinion of me. You see, I think a great deal of that place. It seems to me that the Mass is better there. Why? I will tell you. To that place I have seen for ten years, regularly, every two or three months, a poor, brave father come, who had no other opportunity and no other way of seeing his child, being prevented through some family arrangements. He came at the hour when he knew his son was brought to Mass. The little one never suspected that his father was here. He did not even know, perhaps, that he had a father, the innocent boy! The father, for his part, kept behind a pillar, so that nobody should see him. He looked at his child and wept. This poor man worshiped this little boy. I saw that. This place has become sanctified, as it were, for me, and I have acquired the habit of coming here to hear Mass. I prefer it to the bench, where I have a right to be, as a warden. I was even acquainted slightly with this unfortunate gentleman. He had a father-in-law, a rich aunt, relatives, I do not remember exactly, who threatened to disinherit the child if he, the father, should see him. He had sacrificed himself that his son might some day be rich and happy. They were separated by political opinions. Certainly I approve of political opinions, but there are some people who do not know where to stop. Bless me! because a man was at Waterloo he is not a monster; a father is not separated from his child for that. He was one of Bonaparte's colonels. He is dead, I believe. He lived at Vernon, where my brother is curé, and his name is something like Pontmarie or Montpercy. He had a handsome sabre cut."

"Pontmercy!" said Marius, turning pale.

"Exactly, Pontmercy. Did you know him?"

"Monsieur," said Marius, "he was my father."

The old churchwarden clasped his hands and exclaimed: "Ah! you are the child! Yes, that is it; he ought to be

a man now. Well! poor child, you can say that you had a father who loved you well."

Marius offered his arm to the old man and walked with him to his house. Next day he said to M. Gillenormand: "We have arranged a hunting party with a few friends. Will you permit me to be absent for three days?"

"Four," answered the grandfather; "go; amuse yourself."

And, with a wink, he whispered to his daughter: "Some love affair!"

VI

WHAT IT IS TO HAVE MET A CHURCHWARDEN

WHERE Marius went we shall see a little further on. Marius was absent three days, then he returned to Paris, went straight to the library of the law-school and asked for the file of the "Moniteur."

He read the "Moniteur"; he read all the histories of the Republic and the Empire; the "Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène"; all the memoirs, journals, bulletins, proclamations; he devoured everything. The first time he met his father's name in the bulletins of the grand army he had a fever for a whole week. He went to see the generals under whom George Pontmercy had served — among others, Count H——. The churchwarden, Mabeuf, whom he had gone to see again, gave him an account of the life at Vernon, the colonel's retreat, his flowers, and his solitude. Marius came to understand fully this rare, sublime, and gentle man, this sort of lion-lamb who was his father.

In the meantime, engrossed in this study, which took up all his time, as well as all his thoughts, he hardly saw the Gillenormands more. At the hours of meals he appeared; then, when they looked for him, he was gone. The aunt grumbled. The grandfather smiled. "Pooh, pooh! it is the age for the lasses!" Sometimes the old man added: "The devil! I thought that it was some gallantry. It seems to be a passion."

It was a passion, indeed. Marius was on the way to adoration for his father.

At the same time an extraordinary change took place in his ideas. The phases of this change were numerous and

gradual. As this is the history of many minds of our time, we deem it useful to follow these phases step by step and to indicate them all.

This history, on which he had now cast his eyes, startled him.

The first effect was bewilderment.

The Republic, the Empire, had been to him, till then, nothing but monstrous words. The Republic, a guillotine in a twilight; the Empire, a sabre in the night. He had looked into them, and there, where he expected to find only a chaos of darkness, he had seen, with a sort of astounding surprise, mingled with fear and joy, stars shining, Mirabeau, Vergniaud, Saint-Just, Robespierre, Camille Desmoulins, Danton, and a sun rising, Napoleon. He knew not where he was. He recoiled, blinded by the splendors. Little by little the astonishment passed away, he accustomed himself to this radiance; he looked upon acts without dizziness, he examined personages without terror; the Revolution and the Empire set themselves in luminous perspective before his straining eyes; he saw each of these two groups of events and men arrange themselves into two enormous facts: the Republic into the sovereignty of the civic right restored to the masses, the Empire into the sovereignty of the French idea imposed upon Europe; he saw spring out of the Revolution the grand figure of the people, and out of the Empire the grand figure of France. He declared to himself that all that had been good.

What his bewilderment neglected in this first far too synthetic appreciation we do not think it necessary to indicate here. We are describing the state of a mind upon the march. Progress is not accomplished at a bound. Saying this, once for all, for what precedes as well as for what is to follow, we continue.

He perceived then that up to that time he had comprehended his country no more than he had his father. He had known neither one nor the other, and had had a sort of voluntary night over his eyes. He now saw, and on the one hand he admired, on the other he worshiped.

He was full of regret and remorse, and he thought with despair that all he had in his soul he could say now only to a tomb. Oh! if his father were living, if he had him

still, if God in His mercy and goodness had permitted that his father might be still alive, how he would have run, how he would have plunged headlong, how he would have cried to his father: "Father! I am here! it is I! my heart is the same as yours! I am your son!" How he would have embraced his white head, wet his hair with tears, gazed upon his scar, pressed his hands, worshiped his garments, kissed his feet! oh! why had this father died so soon, before the adolescence, before the justice, before the love of his son! Marius had a continual sob in his heart, which said at every moment: "Alas!" At the same time he became more truly serious, more truly grave, surer of his faith and his thought. Gleams of the true came at every instant to complete his reasoning. It was like an interior growth. He felt a sort of natural aggrandizement which these two new things—his father and his country—brought to him.

As when one has a key everything opened; he explained to himself what he had hated, he penetrated what he had abhorred; he saw clearly henceforth the providential, divine, and human meaning of the great things which he had been taught to detest, and the great men whom he had been instructed to curse. When he thought of his former opinions, which were only of yesterday, but which seemed so ancient to him already, he became indignant at himself, and he smiled. From the rehabilitation of his father he had naturally passed to the rehabilitation of Napoleon.

This, however, we must say, was not accomplished without labor.

From childhood he had been imbued with the judgment of the party of 1814 in regard to Bonaparte. Now, all the prejudices of the Restoration, all its interests, all its instincts, tended to the disfigurement of Napoleon. It execrated him still more than it did Robespierre. It made skilful use of the fatigue of the nation and the hatred of mothers. Bonaparte had become a sort of monster almost fabulous, and to depict him to the imagination of the people, which, as we have already said, resembles the imagination of children, the party of 1814 presented in succession every terrifying mask, from that which is terrible while yet it is grand, to that which is terrible in the grotesque,

from Tiberius to Bugaboo. Thus, in speaking of Bonaparte, you might either weep, or burst with laughter, provided hatred was the basis. Marius had never had—about that man, as he was called—any other ideas in his mind. They had grown together with the tenacity of his nature. There was in him a complete little man who was devoted to hatred of Napoleon.

On reading his history, especially in studying it in documents and materials, the veil which covered Napoleon from Marius's eyes gradually fell away. He perceived something immense, and suspected that he had been deceiving himself up to that moment about Bonaparte as well as about everything else; each day he saw more clearly; and he began to mount slowly, step by step, in the beginning almost with regret, afterward with rapture, and as if drawn by an irresistible fascination, at first the sombre stages, then the dimly lighted stages, finally the luminous and splendid stages of enthusiasm.

One night he was alone in his little room next the roof. His candle was lighted; he was reading, leaning on his table by the open window. All manner of reveries came over him from the expanse of space and mingled with his thought. What a spectacle is night! We hear dull sounds, not knowing whence they come; we see Jupiter, 1,200 times larger than the earth, glistening like an ember, the welkin is black, the stars sparkle, it is terror-inspiring.

He was reading the bulletins of the grand army, those heroic strophes written on the battlefield; he saw there at intervals his father's name, the Emperor's name everywhere; the whole of the grand Empire appeared before him; he felt as if a tide were swelling and rising within him; it seemed to him at moments that his father was passing by him like a breath and whispering in his ear; gradually he grew wandering; he thought he heard the drums, the cannon, the trumpets, the measured tread of the battalions, the dull and distant gallop of the cavalry; from time to time he lifted his eyes to the sky and saw the colossal constellations shining in the limitless abysses, then they fell back upon the book, and saw there other colossal things moving about confusedly. His heart was full. He was transported, trembling, breathless; suddenly, without himself knowing what moved him, or what he was

obeying, he arose, stretched his arms out of the window, gazed fixedly into the gloom, the silence, the darkling infinite, the eternal immensity, and cried: "*Vive l'Empereur!*"

From that moment it was all over; the Corsican ogre—the usurper—the tyrant—the monster who was the lover of his sisters—the actor who took lessons from Talma—the poisoner of Jaffa—the tiger—Bonaparte—all this vanished and gave place in his mind to a suffused and brilliant radiance, in which shone out from an inaccessible height the pale marble phantom of Cæsar. The Emperor had been to his father only the beloved captain, whom one admires, and for whom one devotes himself; to Marius he was something more. He was the predestined constructor of the French group, succeeding the Roman group in the mastery of the world. He was the stupendous architect of a downfall, the successor of Charlemagne, of Louis XI, of Henry IV, of Richelieu, of Louis XIV, and of the committee of public safety, having doubtless his blemishes, his faults, and even his crimes—that is to say, being man; but august in his faults, brilliant in his blemishes, mighty in his crimes.

He was the man foreordained to force all nations to say: the grand nation. He was better still; he was the very incarnation of France, conquering Europe by the sword which he held and the world by the light which he shed. Marius saw in Bonaparte the flashing spectre which will always rise upon the frontier and which will guard the future. Despot, but dictator; despot resulting from a republic and summing up a revolution. Napoleon became to him the people-man as Jesus is the God-man.

We see, like all new converts to a religion, his conversion intoxicated him; he plunged headlong into adhesion, and he went too far. His nature was such; once upon a descent it was almost impossible for him to hold back. Fanaticism for the sword took possession of him, and became complicated in his mind with enthusiasm for the idea. He did not perceive that along with genius, and indiscriminately, he was admiring force—that is to say, that he was installing in the two compartments of his idolatry on one side what is divine and on the other what is brutal. In several respects he began to deceive himself in other mat-

ters. He admitted everything. There is a way of meeting error while on the road of truth. He had a sort of wilful, implicit faith which swallowed everything in mass. On the new path upon which he had entered, in judging the crimes of the ancient régime as well as in measuring the glory of Napoleon, he neglected the attenuating circumstances.

However this might be, a great step had been taken. Where he had formerly seen the fall of the monarchy he now saw the advent of France. His pole-star was changed. What had been the setting was now the rising of the sun. He had turned around.

All these revolutions were accomplished in him without a suspicion of it in his family.

When, in this mysterious labor, he had entirely cast off his old Bourbon and ultra skin, when he had shed the aristocrat, the Jacobite, and the royalist, when he was fully revolutionary, thoroughly democratic and almost republican, he went to an engraver on the Quai des Orfèvres and ordered one hundred cards bearing this name: "Baron Marius Pontmercy."

This was but a very logical consequence of the change which had taken place in him, a change in which everything gravitated about his father.

However, as he knew nobody and could not leave his cards at anybody's door, he put them in his pocket.

By another natural consequence, in proportion as he drew nearer to his father, his memory, and the things for which the colonel had fought for twenty-five years, he drew off from his grandfather. As we have mentioned, for a long time M. Gillenormand's capriciousness had been disagreeable to him. There was already between them all the distaste of a serious young man for a frivolous old man. Geront's gayety shocks and exasperates Werther's melancholy. So long as the same political opinions and the same ideas had been common to them, Marius had met M. Gillenormand by means of them as if upon a bridge. When this bridge fell the abyss appeared. And then, above all, Marius felt inexpressibly revolted when he thought that M. Gillenormand, from stupid motives, had pitilessly torn him from the colonel, thus depriving the father of the child and the child of the father.

Through affection and veneration for his father, Marius had almost reached aversion for his grandfather.

Nothing of this, however, as we have said, was betrayed externally. Only he was more and more frigid; laconic at meals and scarcely ever in the house. When his aunt scolded him for it he was very mild, and gave as an excuse his studies, courts, examinations, dissertations, etc. The grandfather did not change his infallible diagnosis: "In love? I understand it."

Marius was absent for a while from time to time.

"Where can he go to?" asked the aunt.

On one of these journeys, which were always very short, he went to Montfermeil in obedience to the injunction which his father had left him, and sought for the former sergeant of Waterloo, the innkeeper Thenardier. Thenardier had failed, the inn was closed, and nobody knew what had become of him. While making these researches Marius was away from the house four days.

"Decidedly," said the grandfather, "he is going astray."

They thought they noticed that he wore something, upon his breast and under his shirt, hung from his neck by a black ribbon.

VII

SOME PETTICOAT

WE have spoken of a lancer.

He was a grandnephew of M. Gillenormand's on the paternal side, who passed his life away from his family and far from all domestic hearths in garrison. Lieutenant Théodule Gillenormand fulfilled all the conditions required for what is called a handsome officer. He had "the waist of a girl," a way of trailing the victorious sabre and a curling mustache. He came to Paris very rarely, so rarely that Marius had never seen him. The two cousins knew each other only by name. Théodule was, we think we have mentioned, the favorite of Aunt Gillenormand, who preferred him because she did not see him. Not seeing people permits us to imagine in them every perfection.

One morning Mdlle. Gillenormand the elder had retired to her room as much excited as her placidity allowed.

Marius had asked his grandfather again for permission to make a short journey, adding that he intended to set out that evening. "Go!" the grandfather had answered, and M. Gillenormand had added aside, lifting his eyebrows to the top of his forehead: "He is getting to be an old offender." Mdlle. Gillenormand had returned to her room very much perplexed, dropping this exclamation point on the stairs: "That is pretty!" and this interrogation point: "But where can he be going?" She imagined some more or less illicit affair of the heart, a woman in the shadow, a rendezvous, a mystery, and she would not have been sorry to have thrust her spectacles into it. The taste of a mystery resembles the first freshness of a slander; holy souls never despise that. There is in the secret compartments of bigotry some curiosity for scandal.

She was, therefore, a prey to a blind desire for learning a story.

As a diversion from this curiosity, which was giving her a little more agitation than she allowed herself, she took refuge in her talents, and began to festoon cotton upon cotton, in one of those embroideries of the time of the Empire and the Restoration, in which a great many cab-wheels appear. Clumsy work, crabbed worker. She had been sitting in her chair for some hours when the door opened. Mdlle. Gillenormand raised her eyes; Lieutenant Théodule was before her making the regulation bow. She uttered a cry of pleasure. You may be old, you may be a prude, you may be a bigot, you may be his aunt, but it is always pleasant to see a lancer enter your room.

"You here, Théodule!" exclaimed she.

"On my way, aunt."

"Embrace me, then."

"Here goes!" said Théodule.

And he embraced her. Aunt Gillenormand went to her secretary and opened it.

"You stay with us, at least, all the week?"

"Aunt, I leave this evening."

"Impossible."

"Mathematically."

"Stay, my dear Théodule, I beg you."

"The heart says yes, but my orders say no. The story is simple. Our station is changed; we were at Melun, we

are sent to Gaillon. To go from the old station to the new we must pass through Paris. I said: I am going to go and see my aunt."

"Take this for your pains."

She put ten louis into his hand.

"You mean for my pleasure, dear aunt."

Théodule embraced her a second time, and she had the happiness of having her neck a little chafed by the braid of his uniform.

"Do you make the journey on horseback with your regiment?" she asked.

"No, aunt. I wanted to see you. I have a special permit. My servant takes my horse. I go by the diligence. And, speaking of that, I have a question to ask you."

"What?"

"My cousin, Marius Pontmercy, is traveling also, is he?"

"How do you know that?" exclaimed the aunt, her curiosity suddenly excited to the quick.

"On my arrival I went to the diligence to secure my place in the coupé."

"Well?"

"A traveler had already secured a place on the impériale. I saw his name on the book."

"What name?"

"Marius Pontmercy."

"The wicked fellow!" exclaimed the aunt. "Ah! your cousin is not a steady boy like you. To think that he is going to spend the night in a diligence."

"Like me."

"But for you it is from duty; for him it is from dissipation."

"What is the odds?" said Théodule.

Here an event occurred in the life of Mdlle. Gillenormand the elder; she had an idea. If she had been a man, she would have slapped her forehead. She apostrophized Théodule:

"Are you sure that your cousin does not know you?"

"Yes. I have seen him; but he has never deigned to notice me."

"And you are going to travel together so?"

"He on the impériale, I on the coupé."

"Where does this diligence go?"

"To Les Andelys."

"Is there where Marius is going?"

"Unless, like me, he stops on the road. I get off at Vernon to take the branch for Gaillon. I know nothing of Marius's route."

"Marius! what an ugly name! What an idea it was to name him Marius! But you, at least—your name is Théodule?"

"I would rather it were Alfred," said the officer.

"Listen, Théodule."

"I am listening, aunt."

"Pay attention."

"I am paying attention."

"Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"Well, Marius is often away."

"Eh! eh?"

"He travels."

"Ah! ah!"

"He sleeps away."

"Oh! oh!"

"We want to know what is at the bottom of it."

Théodule answered with the calmness of a man of bronze: "Some petticoat."

And with that stifled chuckle which reveals certainty, he added: "A lass!"

"That is clear," exclaimed the aunt, who thought she heard M. Gillenormand speak, and who felt her conviction spring irresistibly from this word *lass*, uttered almost in the same tone by the granduncle and the grandnephew. She resumed: "Do us a kindness. Follow Marius a little way. He does not know you; it will be easy for you. Since there is a lass, try to see the lass. You can write us the account. It will amuse grandfather."

Théodule had no excessive taste for this sort of watching; but he was much affected by the ten louis, and he thought he saw a possible succession of them. He accepted the commission and said: "As you please, aunt." And he added, aside: "There I am, a duenna."

Mdlle. Gillenormand embraced him.

"You would not play such pranks, Théodule. You are obedient to discipline, you are the slave of your orders, you are a scrupulous and dutiful man, and you would not leave your family to go and see such a creature."

The lancer put on the satisfied grimace of Cartouche praised for his honesty.

Marius, on the evening which followed this dialogue, mounted the diligence without suspecting that he was watched. As to the watchman, the first thing that he did was to fall asleep. His slumber was sound and indicated a clear conscience. Argus snored all night.

At daybreak the driver of the diligence shouted: "Vernon! Vernon relay! passengers for Vernon?" And Lieutenant Théodule awoke.

"Good," growled he, half-asleep; "here I get off."

Then, his memory clearing up by degrees, an effort of awakening, he remembered his aunt, the ten louis, and the account he was to render of Marius's acts and deeds. It made him laugh.

"Perhaps he has left the coach," thought he, while he buttoned up his undress waistcoat. "He may have stopped at Poisy; he may have stopped at Triel; if he did not get off at Meulan, he may have got off at Mantes, unless he got off at Rolleboise, or unless he only came to Pacy, with the choice of turning to the left toward Evreux, or to the right toward Laroche Guyon. Run after him, aunt. What the devil shall I write to her, the good old woman?"

At this moment a pair of black pantaloons getting down from the impériale appeared before the window of the coupé.

"Can that be Marius?" said the lieutenant.

It was Marius.

A little peasant girl, beside the coach, among the horses and postilions, was offering flowers to the passengers. "Flowers for your ladies," cried she.

Marius approached her and bought the most beautiful flowers in her basket.

"Now," said Théodule, leaping down from the coach, "there is something that interests me. Who the deuce is he going to carry those flowers to? It ought to be a

mighty pretty woman for so fine a bouquet. I would like to see her."

And, no longer now by command, but from personal curiosity, like those dogs who hunt on their own account, he began to follow Marius.

Marius paid no attention to Théodule. Some elegant women got out of the diligence—he did not look at them. He seemed to see nothing about him.

"Is he in love?" thought Théodule.

Marius walked toward the church.

"All right," said Théodule to himself. "The church! that is it. These rendezvous which are spiced with a bit of mass are the best of all. Nothing is so exquisite as an ogle which passes across the good God."

Arriving at the church Marius did not go in, but went behind the building. He disappeared at the corner of one of the buttresses of the apsis.

"The rendezvous is outside," said Théodule. "Let us see the lass."

And he advanced on tiptoe toward the corner which Marius had turned.

On reaching it he stopped, astounded.

Marius, his face hid in his hands, was kneeling in the grass, upon a grave. He had scattered his bouquet. At the end of the grave, at an elevation which marked the head, there was a black wooden cross with this name in white letters: "Colonel Baron Pontmercy." He heard Marius sobbing.

The lass was a tomb.

VIII

MARBLE AGAINST GRANITE

IT was here that Marius had come the first time that he absented himself from Paris. It was here that he returned every time that M. Gillenormand said: "He sleeps out."

Lieutenant Théodule was absolutely disconcerted by this unexpected encounter with a sepulchre; he experienced a disagreeable and singular sensation which he was incapable of analyzing, and which was made up of respect for a tomb mingled with respect for a colonel. He re-

treated, leaving Marius alone in the churchyard; and there was something of discipline in this retreat. Death appeared to him with huge epaulets, and he gave him almost a military salute. Not knowing what to write to his aunt, he decided to write nothing at all; and probably nothing would have resulted from the discovery made by Théodule in regard to Marius's amours, had not, by one of those mysterious arrangements so frequently accidental, the scene at Vernon been almost immediately followed by a sort of counter-blow at Paris.

Marius returned from Vernon early in the morning of the third day, was set down at his grandfather's, and, fatigued by the two nights passed in the diligence, feeling the need of making up for his lack of sleep by an hour at the swimming-school, ran quickly up to his room, took only time enough to lay off his traveling coat and the black ribbon which he wore about his neck, and went away to the bath.

M. Gillenormand, who had risen early, like all old persons who are in good health, had heard him come in, and hastened as fast as he could with his old legs to climb to the top of the stairs where Marius's room was, that he might embrace him, question him while embracing him, and find out something about where he came from.

But the youth had taken less time to go down than the octogenarian to go up, and when Grandfather Gillenormand entered the garret room Marius was no longer there.

The bed was not disturbed, and upon the bed were displayed without distrust the coat and the black ribbon.

"I like that better," said M. Gillenormand.

And a moment afterward he entered the parlor where Mdle. Gillenormand the elder was already seated, embroidering her cab wheels.

The entrance was triumphal.

M. Gillenormand held in one hand the coat and in the other the neck ribbon, and cried: "Victory! We are going to penetrate the mystery! we shall know the end of the end, we shall feel the libertinism of our trickster! here we are with the romance even. I have the portrait!"

In fact, a black shagreen box, much like to a medallion, was fastened to the ribbon.

The old man took this box and looked at it some time

without opening it with that air of desire, ravishment, and anger with which a poor, hungry devil sees an excellent dinner pass under his nose when it is not for him.

"For it is evidently a portrait. I know all about that. This is worn tenderly upon the heart. What fools they are! Some abominable queen, enough to make one shudder probably! Young folks have such bad taste in these days!"

"Let us see, father," said the old maid.

The box opened by pressing a spring. They found nothing in it but a piece of paper carefully folded.

"From the same to the same," said M. Gillenormand, bursting with laughter. "I know what that is. A love-letter!"

"Ah! then let us read it!" said the aunt.

And she put on her spectacles. They unfolded the paper and read this:

"For my Son: The Emperor made me a baron upon the battlefield of Waterloo. Since the Restoration contests this title, which I have bought with my blood, my son will take it and bear it. I need not say that he will be worthy of it."

The feelings of the father and daughter can not be described. They felt chilled as by the breath of a death's head. They did not exchange a word. M. Gillenormand, however, said in a low voice and as if talking to himself: "It is the handwriting of that sabre."

The aunt examined the paper, turned it on all sides, then put it back in the box.

Just at that moment a little oblong package, wrapped in blue paper, fell from a pocket of the coat. Mdlle. Gillenormand picked it up and unfolded the blue paper. It was Marius's one hundred cards. She passed one of them to M. Gillenormand, who read: "Baron Marius Pontmercy."

The old man rang. Nicolette came. M. Gillenormand took the ribbon, the box, and the coat, threw them on the floor in the middle of the parlor, and said: "Take away those things."

A full hour passed in complete silence. The old man and the old maid sat with their backs turned to one another, and were probably, each on their side, thinking over

the same things. At the end of that hour, Aunt Gillenormand said: "Pretty."

A few minutes afterward, Marius made his appearance. He came in. Even before crossing the threshold of the parlor he perceived his grandfather holding one of his cards in his hand, who, on seeing him, exclaimed with his crushing air of sneering bourgeois superiority: "Stop! stop! stop! stop! you are a baron now. I present you my compliments. What does this mean?"

Marius colored slightly and answered: "It means that I am my father's son."

M. Gillenormand checked his laugh and said harshly: "Your father; I am your father."

"My father," resumed Marius with downcast eyes and stern manner, "was a humble and heroic man, who served the Republic and France gloriously, who was great in the greatest history that men have ever made, who lived a quarter of a century in the camp, by day under grape and under balls, by night in the snow, in the mud, and in the rain, who captured colors, who received twenty wounds, who died forgotten and abandoned, and who had but one fault; that was in loving too dearly two ingrates, his country and me."

This was more than M. Gillenormand could listen to. At the word "Republic" he rose, or rather sprang, to his feet. Every one of the words which Marius had pronounced had produced the effect upon the old royalist's face of a blast from a bellows upon a burning coal. From dark he had become red, from red purple, and from purple glowing.

"Marius!" exclaimed he, "abominable child! I don't know what your father was! I don't want to know! I know nothing about him and I don't know him! but what I do know is that there was never anything but miserable wretches among all that rabble! that they were all beggars, assassins, red caps, thieves! I say all! I say all! I know nobody! I say all! do you hear, Marius? Look you, indeed, you are as much a baron as my slipper! they were all bandits who served Robespierre! all brigands who served B-o-na-parte! all traitors who betrayed, betrayed, betrayed! their legitimate king! all cowards who ran from the Prussians and the English at Waterloo! That is

what I know. If your father is among them I don't know him, I am sorry for it, so much the worse, your servant!"

In his turn, Marius now became the coal and M. Gillenormand the bellows. Marius shuddered in every limb, he knew not what to do, his head burned. He was the priest who sees all his wafers thrown to the winds, the fakir who sees a passer-by spit upon his idol. He could not allow such things to be said before him unanswered. But what could he do? His father had been trodden under foot and stamped upon in his presence, but by whom? by his grandfather. How should he avenge the one without outraging the other? It was impossible for him to insult his grandfather, and it was equally impossible for him not to avenge his father. On one hand a sacred tomb, on the other white hair. He was for a few moments dizzy and staggering with all this whirlwind in his head; then he raised his eyes, looked straight at his grandfather, and cried in a thundering voice: "Down with the Bourbons, and that great hog, Louis XVIII!"

Louis XVIII had been dead for four years; but it was all the same to him.

The old man, scarlet as he was, suddenly became whiter than his hair. He turned toward a bust of the Duke de Berry which stood upon the mantel, and bowed to it profoundly with a sort of peculiar majesty. Then he walked twice, slowly and in silence, from the fireplace to the window and from the window to the fireplace, traversing the whole length of the room and making the floor crack, as if an image of stone were walking over it. The second time he bent toward his daughter, who was enduring the shock with the stupor of an aged sheep, and said to her with a smile that was almost calm: "A baron like monsieur and a bourgeois like me can not remain under the same roof."

And all at once straightening up, pallid, trembling, terrible, his forehead swelling with the fearful radiance of anger, he stretched his arm toward Marius and cried to him: "Be off."

Marius left the house.

The next day M. Gillenormand said to his daughter: "You will send sixty pistoles every six months to this blood-drinker, and never speak of him to me again."

Having an immense residuum of fury to expend, and not knowing what to do with it, he spoke to his daughter with coldness for more than three months.

Marius, for his part, departed in indignation. A circumstance, which we must mention, had aggravated his exasperation still more. There are always such little fatalities complicating domestic dramas. Feelings are im-bittered by them, although in reality the faults are none the greater. In hurriedly carrying away, at the old man's command, Marius's "things" to his room, Nicolette had, without perceiving it, dropped, probably on the garret stairs, which were dark, the black shagreen medallion which contained the paper written by the colonel. Neither the paper nor the medallion could be found. Marius was convinced that "M. Gillenormand"—from that day forth he never named him otherwise—had thrown "his father's will" into the fire. He knew by heart the few lines written by the colonel, and consequently nothing was lost. But the paper, the writing, that sacred relic, all that was his heart itself—what had been done with it?

Marius went away without saying where he was going, and without knowing where he was going, with thirty francs, his watch, and a few clothes in a carpet-bag. He hired a cabriolet by the hour, jumped in, and drove at random toward the Latin Quarter.

What was Marius to do?

BOOK FOURTH

THE FRIENDS OF THE A B C

I

A GROUP WHICH ALMOST BECAME HISTORIC

AT that period, apparently indifferent, something of a revolutionary thrill was vaguely felt. Whispers coming from the depths of '89 and of '92 were in the air. Young Paris was, excuse the expression, in the process of moulting. People were transformed, almost without suspecting it, by the very movement of the time. The hand which moves over the dial moves also among souls. Each one

took the step forward which was before him. Royalists became liberals, liberals became democrats.

It was like a rising tide, complicated by a thousand ebbs; the peculiarity of the ebb is to make mixtures; thence very singular combinations of ideas; men worshiped at the same time Napoleon and liberty. We are now writing history. These were the mirages of that day. Opinions pass through phases. Voltairian royalism, a grotesque variety, had a fellow not less strange, Bonapartist liberalism.

Other groups of minds were more serious. They fathomed principle; they attached themselves to right. They longed for the absolute, they caught glimpses of the infinite realizations; the absolute, by its very rigidity, pushes the mind toward the boundless, and makes it float in the illimitable. There is nothing like dream to create the future. Utopia to-day, flesh and blood to-morrow.

Advanced opinions had double foundations. The appearance of the mystery threatened "the established order of things," which was sullen and suspicious—a sign in the highest degree revolutionary. The reservations of power meet the reservations of the people in the sap. The incubation of insurrections replies to the plotting of *coups d'état*.

At that time there were not yet in France any of those underlying organizations, like the German Tugendbund and the Italian Carbonari, but here and there obscure excavations were branching out. La Cougourde was assuming form at Aix; there was in Paris, among other affiliations of this kind, the Society of Friends of the A B C.

Who were the Friends of the A B C? A society, having as its aim, in appearance, the education of children; in reality, the elevation of men.

They declared themselves the Friends of the A B C.* The *abaissé* (the abased) were the people. They wished to raise them up. A pun at which you should not laugh. Puns are sometimes weighty in politics, witness the *Castratus ad castra*, which made Narses a general of an army;

* A B C in French is pronounced ah-bay-say; exactly like the French word *abaisse*.

witness, *Barbari et Barberini*; witness, *Fueros y Fuegos*; witness, *Tu es Petrus et super hanc Petram*, etc.

The Friends of the A B C were not numerous. It was a secret society in the embryonic state; we should almost say a coterie, if coteries produced heroes. They met in Paris, at two places, near the Halles, in a wine-shop called "Corinthe," which will be referred to hereafter, and near the Pantheon, in a little coffee-house on the Place Saint Michael, called "Le Café Musain," now torn down; the first of these two places of rendezvous was near the workmen, the second near the students.

The ordinary conventicles of the Friends of the A B C were held in a back room of the Café Musain.

This room, quite distant from the café, with which it communicated by a very long passage, had two windows, and an exit by a private stairway upon the little Rue des Grès. They smoked, drank, played, and laughed there. They talked very loud about everything, and in whispers about something else. On the wall was nailed—an indication sufficient to awaken the suspicion of a police officer—an old map of France under the Republic.

Most of the Friends of the A B C were students, in thorough understanding with a few workmen. The names of the principal are as follows. They belong to a certain extent to history: Enjolras, Combeferre, Jean Prouvaire, Feuilly, Courfeyrac, Bahorel, Lesgle, or Laigle, Joly, Grataire.

These young men constituted a sort of family among themselves, by force of friendship. All except Laigle were from the south.

This was a remarkable group. It has vanished into the invisible depths which are behind us. At the point of this drama which we have now reached, it may not be useless to throw a ray of light upon these young heads before the reader sees them sink into the shadow of a tragic fate.

Enjolras, whom we have named first—the reason why will be seen by and by—was an only son, and was rich.

Enjolras was a charming young man, who was capable of being terrible. He was angelically beautiful. He was Antinous wild. You would have said, to see the thoughtful reflection of his eye, that he had already, in

some preceding existence, passed through the revolutionary Apocalypse. He had the tradition of it like an eye-witness. He knew all the little details of the grand thing, a pontifical and warrior nature, strange in a youth. He was officiating and militant; from the immediate point of view, he was a soldier of democracy; above the movement of the time, a priest of the ideal. He had a deep eye, lids a little red, thick underlip, easily becoming disdainful, and a high forehead. Much forehead in a face is like much sky in a horizon. Like certain young men of the beginning of this century and the end of the last century, who became illustrious in early life, he had an exceedingly youthful look, as fresh as a young girl, although he had hours of pallor. He was now a man, but he seemed a child still. His twenty-two years of age appeared seventeen; he was serious, he did not seem to know that there was on the earth a being called woman. He had but one passion, the right; but one thought, to remove all obstacles. Upon Mt. Aventine he would have been Gracchus; in the convention he would have been St. Just. He hardly saw the roses, he ignored the spring, he did not hear the birds sing; Evadne's bare bosom would have moved him no more than Aristogiton; to him, as to Harmodius, flowers were good only to hide the sword. He was severe in his pleasures. Before everything but the Republic he chastely dropped his eyes. He was the marble lover of liberty. His speech was roughly inspired and had the tremor of a hymn. He astonished you by his soaring. Woe to the love affair that should venture to intrude upon him! Had any grisette of the Place Cambray or the Rue St. Jean de Beauvais, seeing this college boy's face, this form of a page, those long, fair lashes, those blue eyes, that hair flying in the wind, those rosy cheeks, those pure lips, those exquisite teeth, felt a desire to taste all this dawn, and tried her beauty upon Enjolras, a surprising and terrible look would have suddenly shown her the great gulf, and taught her not to confound with the gallant cherubim of Beaumarchais the fearful cherubim of Ezekiel.

Beside Enjolras, who represented the logic of the Revolution, Combeferre represented its philosophy. Between the logic of the Revolution and its philosophy there is this

difference—that its logic could conclude with war, while its philosophy could only end in peace. Combeferre completed and corrected Enjolras. He was lower and broader. His desire was to instill into all minds the broad principles of general ideas; he said: “Revolution, but civilization”; and about the steep mountain he spread the vast blue horizon. Hence, in all Combeferre’s views there was something attainable and practicable. Revolution with Combeferre was more respirable than with Enjolras. Enjolras expressed its divine right and Combeferre its natural right. The first went as far as Robespierre; the second stopped at Condorcet. Combeferre more than Enjolras lived the life of the world generally. Had it been given to these two young men to take a place in history, one would have been the upright man, the other would have been the wise man. Enjolras was more manly, Combeferre was more humane. *Homo* and *Vir*, indeed, express the exact shade of difference. Combeferre was gentle, as Enjolras was severe, from natural purity. He loved the word citizen, but he preferred the word man. He would have gladly said: “*Hombre*,” like the Spaniards. He read everything, went to the theatres, attended the public courts, learned the polarization of light from Arago, was enraptured with a lecture in which Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire had explained the double function of the exterior carotid artery and the interior carotid artery, one of which supplies the face, the other the brain; he kept pace with the times, followed science step by step, confronted St. Simon with Fourier, deciphered hieroglyphics, broke the pebbles which he found and talked about geology, drew a moth-butterfly from memory, pointed out the mistakes in French in the dictionary of the Academy, studied Puysegur and Deleuze, affirmed nothing, not even miracles; denied nothing, not even ghosts; looked over the files of the “*Moniteur*,” reflected. He declared the future was in the hands of the schoolmaster, and busied himself with questions of education. He desired that society should work without ceasing at the elevation of the intellectual and moral level; at the coining of knowledge; at bringing ideas into circulation; at the growth of the mind in youth; and he feared that the poverty of the methods then in vogue, the meanness of a literary world which was

circumscribed by two or three centuries, called classical, the tyrannical dogmatism of official pedants, scholastic prejudices and routine, would result in making artificial oyster-beds of our colleges. He was learned, purist, precise, universal, a hard student, and at the same time given to musing, "even chimerical," said his friends. He believed in all the dreams—railroads, the suppression of suffering in surgical operations, the fixing of the image in the camera obscura, the electric telegraph, the steering of balloons. Little dismayed, moreover, by the citadels built up on all sides against the human race by superstitions, despotisms, and prejudices, he was one of those who think that science will at last turn the position. Enjolras was a chief; Combeferre was a guide. You would have preferred to fight with the one and march with the other. Not that Combeferre was not capable of fighting; he did not refuse to close with an obstacle, and to attack it by main strength and by explosion, but to put, gradually, by the teaching of axioms and the promulgation of positive laws, the human race in harmony with its destinies pleased him better; and of the two lights, his inclination was rather for illumination than for conflagration. A fire would cause a dawn undoubtedly, but why not wait for the break of day? A volcano enlightens, but the morning enlightens still better. Combeferre perhaps preferred the pure radiance of the beautiful to the glory of the sublime. A light disturbed by smoke, an advance purchased by violence, but half satisfied this tender and serious mind. A headlong plunge of a people into truth, a '93, started him; still stagnation repelled him yet more, in it he felt putrefaction and death; on the whole, he liked foam better than miasma, and he preferred the torrent to the cesspool, and the Falls of Niagara to the Lake of Montfaucon. In short, he desired neither halt nor haste. While his tumultuous friends, chivalrously devoted to the absolute, adored and asked for splendid revolutionary adventures, Combeferre inclined to let progress do her work—the good progress; cold perhaps, but pure; methodical but irreproachable; phlegmatic but imperturbable. Combeferre would have knelt down and clasped his hands, asking that the future might come in all its radiant purity, and that nothing might disturb the unlimited, virtuous de-

velopment of the people. "The good must be innocent," he repeated incessantly. And, in fact, if it is the grandeur of the Revolution to gaze steadily upon the dazzling ideal, and to fly to it through the lightnings, with blood and fire in its talons, it is the beauty of progress to be without a stain; and there is between Washington, who represents the one, and Danton, who incarnates the other, the difference which separates the angel with the wings of a swan from the angel with the wings of an eagle.

Jean Prouvaire was yet a shade more subdued than Combeferre. He called himself Jehan from that little momentary fancifulness which mingled with the deep and powerful movement from which arose the study of the Middle Ages, then so necessary. Jean Prouvaire was addicted to love; he cultivated a pot of flowers, played on the flute, made verses, loved the people, mourned over woman, wept over childhood, confounded the future and God in the same faith, and blamed the Revolution for having cut off a royal head, that of André Chénier. His voice was usually delicate, but at times suddenly became masculine. He was well read, even to erudition, and almost an Orientalist. Above all, he was good, and, a very natural thing to one who knows how near goodness borders upon grandeur, in poetry he preferred the grand. He understood Italian, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and that served him only to read four poets—Dante, Juvenal, Æschylus, and Isaiah. In French he preferred Corneille to Racine, and Agrippa d'Aubigné to Corneille. He was fond of strolling in fields of wild oats and blue-bells, and paid almost as much attention to the clouds as to passing events. His mind had two attitudes—one toward man, the other toward God; he studied, or he contemplated. All day he pondered over social questions: wages, capital, credit, marriage, religion, liberty of thought, liberty of love, education, punishment, misery, association, property, production, and distribution, the lower enigma which covers the human ant-hill with a shadow; and at night he gazed upon the stars, those enormous beings. Like Enjolras, he was rich, and an only son. He spoke gently, bent his head, cast down his eyes, smiled with embarrassment, dressed badly, had an awkward air, blushed at nothing, was very timid, still intrepid.

Feuilly was a fan-maker, an orphan, who with difficulty earned three francs a day, and who had but one thought, to deliver the world. He had still another desire—to instruct himself; which he also called deliverance. He had taught himself to read and write; all that he knew he had learned alone. Feuilly was a generous heart. He had an immense embrace. This orphan had adopted the people. Being without a mother, he had meditated upon his mother country. He was not willing that there should be any man upon the earth without a country. He nurtured within himself, with the deep divination of the man of the people, what we now call the idea of nationality. He had learned history expressly that he might base his indignation upon a knowledge of its cause. In this now upper room of Utopists, particularly interested in France, he represented the foreign nations. His specialty was Greece, Poland, Hungary, the Danubian provinces, and Italy. He uttered these names incessantly, in season and out of season, with the tenacity of the right. Turkey upon Greece and Thessaly, Russia upon Warsaw, Austria upon Venice; these violations exasperated him. The grand highway robbery of 1772 excited him above all. There is no more sovereign eloquence than the truth in indignation; he was eloquent with this eloquence. He was never done with that infamous date, 1772, that noble and valiant people blotted out by treachery, that three-fold crime, that monstrous ambushade, prototype and pattern of all those terrible suppressions of states which, since, have stricken several noble nations, and have, so to say, erased the record of their birth. All the contemporary assaults upon society date from the partition of Poland. The partition of Poland is a theorem of which all the present political crimes are corollaries. Not a despot, not a traitor, for a century past, who had not viséd, confirmed, countersigned, and set his initials to, *ne varietur*, the partition of Poland. When you examine the list of modern treasons that appears first of all. The congress of Vienna took advice of this crime before consummating its own. The halloo was sounded by 1772, 1815 is the quarry. Such was the usual text of Feuilly. This poor workingman had made himself a teacher of justice, and she rewarded him by making him grand. For there is, in fact, eternity in the

right. Warsaw can no more be Tartar than Venice can be Teutonic. The kings lose their labor at this, and their honor. Sooner or later, the submerged country floats to the surface and reappears. Greece again becomes Greece, Italy again becomes Italy. The protest of the right against the fact persists forever. The robbery of a people never becomes prescriptive. These lofty swindles have no future. You can not pick the mark out of a nation as you can out of a handkerchief.

Courfeyrac had a father whose name was M. de Courfeyrac. One of the false ideas of the Restoration in point of aristocracy and nobility was its faith in the particle. The particle, we know, has no significance. But the bourgeois of the time of *La Minerve* considered this poor *de* so highly that men thought themselves obliged to renounce it. M. de Chauvelin called himself M. Chauvelin, M. de Caumartin, M. Caumartin; M. de Constant de Rebecque, Benjamin Constant; M. de Lafayette, M. Lafayette. Courfeyrac did not wish to be behind, and called himself briefly Courfeyrac.

We might almost, in what concerns Courfeyrac, stop here, and content ourselves with saying as to the remainder: "Courfeyrac, see Tholomyès."

Courfeyrac had, in fact, that youthful animation which we might call the diabolic beauty of the mind. In later life this dies out, like the playfulness of the kitten, and all that grace ends on two feet in the bourgeois and four paws in the mouser.

This style of mind is transmitted from generation to generation of students, passed from hand to hand by the successive growths of youth, *quasi cursores*, nearly always the same; so that, as we have just indicated, any person who had listened to Courfeyrac, in 1828, would have thought he was hearing Tholomyès in 1817. Courfeyrac only was a brave fellow. Beneath the apparent similarities of the exterior mind there was great dissimilarity between Tholomyès and him. The latent man which existed in each, was, in the first, altogether different from what it was in the second. There was in Tholomyès an attorney, and in Courfeyrac a paladin.

Enjolras was the chief, Combeferre was the guide, Courfeyrac was the centre. The others gave more light,

he gave more heat; the truth is, that he had all the qualities of a centre, roundness and radiance.

Bahorel had figured in the bloody tumult of June, 1822, on the occasion of the burial of young Lallemand.

Bahorel was a creature of good humor and bad company, brave, a spendthrift, prodigal almost to generosity, talkative almost to eloquence, bold almost to effrontery; the best possible devil's-pie; with foolhardy waistcoats and scarlet opinions; a wholesale blusterer—that is to say, liking nothing so well as a quarrel, unless it were an émeute, and nothing so well as an émeute, unless it were a revolution; always ready to break a paving-stone, then to tear up a street, then to demolish a government, to see the effect of it. A student of the eleventh year, he had adopted for his motto: “Never a lawyer,” and for his coat-of-arms a bedroom table on which you might discern a square cap. Whenever he passed by the law school, which rarely happened, he buttoned up his overcoat; the paletot was not yet invented, and he took hygienic precautions. He said of the portal of the school: “What a fine old man!” and of the dean, M. Delvincourt: “What a monument!” He saw in his studies subjects for ditties, and in his professors opportunities for caricatures. He ate up, in doing nothing, a considerable allowance, something like 3,000 francs. His parents were peasants, in whom he had succeeded in inculcating a respect for their son.

He said of them: “They are peasants and not bourgeois, which explains their intelligence.”

Bahorel, a capricious man, was scattered over several cafés; the others had habits, he had none. He loafed. To err is human. To loaf is Parisian. At bottom a penetrating mind, and more of a thinker than he seemed.

He served as a bond between the Friends of the A B C and some other groups which were without definite shape, but which were to take form afterward.

In this conclave of young heads there was one bald member.

The Marquis d’Avaray, whom Louis XVIII made a duke for having helped him into a cab the day that he emigrated, related that, in 1814, on his return to France, as the king landed at Calais, a man presented a petition to him.

"What do you want?" said the king.

"Sire, a post-office."

"What is your name?"

"L'Aigle." (The eagle.)

The king scowled, looked at the signature of the petition, and saw the name written thus: "Lesgle." This orthography, anything but Bonapartist, pleased the king, and he began to smile. "Sire," resumed the man with the petition, "my ancestor was a dog-trainer surnamed Lesgueules. [The chaps.] This surname has become my name. My name is Lesgueules, by contraction Lesgle, and by corruption L'Aigle." This made the king finish his smile. He afterward gave the man the post-office at Meaux, either intentionally or inadvertently.

The bald member of the club was son of this Lesgle or Lègle, and signed his name Lègle (de Meaux). His comrades, for the sake of brevity, called him Bossuet.

Bossuet was a cheery fellow who was unlucky. His specialty was to succeed in nothing. On the other hand, he laughed at everything. At twenty-five he was bald. His father had died owning a house and some land; but he, the son, had found nothing more urgent than to lose this house and land in a bad speculation. He had nothing left. He had considerable knowledge and wit, but he always miscarried. Everything failed him, everything deceived him; whatever he built up fell upon him. If he split wood he cut his finger. If he had a mistress he very soon discovered that he had also a friend. Every moment some misfortune happened to him; hence his joviality. He said: "I live under the roof of the falling tiles." Rarely astonished, since he was always expecting some accident, he took ill-luck with serenity, and smiled at the vexations of destiny like one who hears a jest. He was poor, but his fund of good-humor was inexhaustible. He soon reached his last sou, never his last burst of laughter. When met by adversity he saluted that acquaintance cordially; he patted catastrophes on the back; he was so familiar with fatality as to call it by its nickname. "Good-morning, old Genius," he would say.

These persecutions of fortune had made him inventive. He was full of resources. He had no money, but he found means, when it seemed good to him, to go to "reckless ex-

penses." One night he even spent 100 francs on a supper with a queen, which inspired him in the midst of the orgy with this memorable saying: "Daughter of five Louis, pull off my boots."

Bossuet was slowly making his way toward the legal profession; he was doing his law in the manner of Bahorel. Bossuet had never much domicile; sometimes none at all. He lodged sometimes with one, sometimes with another—oftenest with Joly. Joly was studying medicine. He was two years younger than Bossuet.

Joly was a young *Malade Imaginaire*. What he had learned in medicine was rather to be a patient than a physician. At twenty-three he thought himself a valetudinarian and passed his time in looking at his tongue in a mirror. He declared that man is a magnet, like the needle, and in his room he placed his bed with the head to the south and the foot to the north, so that at night the circulation of the blood should not be interfered with by the grand magnetic current of the globe. In stormy weather he felt his pulse. Nevertheless, the gayest of all. All these incoherences, young, notional, sickly, joyous, got along very well together, and the result was an eccentric and agreeable person, whom his comrades, prodigal of consonants, called Jolllly. "You can fly upon four L's" (*ails*, wings), said Jean Prouvaire.

Joly had the habit of rubbing his nose with the end of his cane, which is an indication of a sagacious mind.

All these young men, diverse as they were, and of whom, as a whole, we ought only to speak seriously, had the same religion—progress.

All were legitimate sons of the French Revolution. The lightest became solemn when pronouncing this date—'89. Their fathers, according to the flesh, were or had been Feuillants, royalists, doctrinaires—it mattered little; this hurly-burly which antedated them had nothing to do with them; they were young; the pure blood of principles flowed in their veins. They attached themselves, without an intermediate shade, to incorruptible right and to absolute duty.

Affiliated and initiated, they secretly sketched out their ideas.

Among all these passionate hearts and all these undoubt-

ing minds there was one sceptic. How did he happen to be there? From juxtaposition. The name of this sceptic was Grantaire, and he usually signed with his rebus: R (*grand R*, great R). Grantaire was a man who took good care not to believe anything. He was, moreover, one of the students who had learned most during their course in Paris; he knew that the best coffee was at the Café Lemblin and the best billiard table at the Café Voltaire; that you could find good rolls and good girls at the hermitage on the Boulevard du Main, broiled chickens at Mother Saguet's, excellent chowders at the Barrière de la Cunette, and a peculiar light white wine at the Barrière du Combat. He knew the good places for everything; furthermore, boxing, tennis, a few dances, and he was a profound cudgel-player. A great drinker to boot. He was frightfully ugly; the prettiest shoe binder of that period, Irma Boissy, revolting at his ugliness, had uttered this sentence: "Grantaire is impossible," but Grantaire's self-conceit was not disconcerted. He looked tenderly and fixedly upon every woman, appearing to say of them all, "If I only would," and trying to make his comrades believe that he was in general demand.

All these words: "Rights of the people, rights of man, social contract, French Revolution, republic, democracy, humanity, civilization, religion, progress," were, to Grantaire, very nearly meaningless. He smiled at them. Scepticism, that carries off the intellect, had not left one entire idea in his mind. He lived in irony. This was his axiom: "There is only one certainty, my full glass." He ridiculed all devotion, under all circumstances, in the brother as well as the father, in Robespierre the younger as well as Loizerolles.

"They made great progress by dying," he exclaimed. He said of the cross: "There is a gibbet which has made a success." A rover, a gambler, a libertine, and often drunk, he displeased these young thinkers by singing incessantly: "I loves the girls and I loves good wine." Air: "Vive Henri IV."

Still this sceptic had a fanaticism. This fanaticism was neither an idea nor a dogma nor an art nor a science; it was a man; Enjolras. Grantaire admired, loved and venerated Enjolras. To whom did this anarchical doubter

ally himself in this phalanx of absolute minds? To the most absolute. In what way did Enjolras subjugate him? By ideas? No. By character. A phenomenon often seen. A sceptic adhering to a believer; that is as simple as the law of the complementary colors. What we lack attracts us. Nobody loves the light like the blind man. The dwarf adores the drum-major. The toad is always looking up at the sky; why? To see the bird fly. Grantaire, in whom doubt was creeping, loved to see faith soaring in Enjolras. He had need of Enjolras. Without understanding it himself clearly, and without trying to explain it, that chaste, healthy, firm, direct, hard, candid nature charmed him. He admired, by instinct, his opposite. His soft, wavering, disjointed, diseased, deformed ideas attached themselves to Enjolras as to a backbone. His moral spine leaned upon that firmness. Grantaire, by the side of Enjolras, became somebody again. He was himself, moreover, composed of two apparently incompatible elements. He was ironical and cordial. His indifference was loving. His mind dispensed with belief, yet his heart could not dispense with friendship. A thorough contradiction; for an affection & a conviction. His nature was so. There are men who seem born to be the opposite, the reverse, the counterpart. They are Pollux, Patroclus, Nisus, Eudamidas, Hephæstion, Pechméja. They live only upon condition of leaning on another; their names are continuations, and are only written preceded by the conjunction *and*; their existence is not their own; it is the other side of a destiny which is not theirs. Grantaire was one of these men. He was the reverse of Enjolras.

We might almost say that affinities commence with the letters of the alphabet. In the series, O and P are inseparable. You can, as you choose, pronounce O and P, or Orestes and Pylades.

Grantaire, a true satellite of Enjolras, lived in this circle of young people; he dwelt in it; he took pleasure only in it; he followed them everywhere. His delight was to see these forms coming and going in the fumes of the wine. He was tolerated for his good-humor.

Enjolras, being a believer, disdained this sceptic, and being sober, scorned this drunkard. He granted him a little haughty pity. Grantaire was an unaccepted Pylades.

Always rudely treated by Enjolras, harshly repelled, rejected, yet returning, he said of Enjolras: "What a fine statue!"

II

FUNERAL ORATION UPON BLONDEAU, BY BOSSUET

ON a certain afternoon, which had, as we shall see, some coincidence with events before related, Laigle de Meaux was leaning lazily back against the doorway of the Café Musain. He had the appearance of a caryatid in vacation; he was supporting nothing but his reverie. He was looking at the Place St. Michel. Leaning back is a way of lying down standing which is not disliked by dreamers. Laigle de Meaux was thinking, without melancholy, of a little mishap which had befallen him the day before at the law school, and which modified his personal plans for the future—plans which were, moreover, rather indefinite.

Reverie does not hinder a cabriolet from going by, nor the dreamer from noticing the cabriolet. Laigle de Meaux, whose eyes were wandering in a sort of general stroll, perceived, through all his somnambulism, a two-wheeled vehicle turning into the square which was moving at a walk, as if undecided. What did this cabriolet want? why was it moving at a walk? Laigle looked at it. There was inside, beside the driver, a young man, and before the young man a large carpet-bag. The bag exhibited to the passers this name, written in big black letters upon a card sewed to the cloth: "Marius Pontmercy."

This name changed Laigle's attitude. He straightened up and addressed this apostrophe to the young man in the cabriolet: "M. Marius Pontmercy?"

The cabriolet, thus called upon, stopped.

The young man, who also seemed to be profoundly musing, raised his eyes.

"Well?" said he.

"You are M. Marius Pontmercy?"

"Certainly."

"I was looking for you," said Laigle de Meaux.

"How is that?" inquired Marius; for he it was, in fact; he had just left his grandfather's, and he had before him a face he saw for the first time. "I do not know you."

"Nor I either. I do not know you," answered Laigle.

Marius thought he had met a buffoon, and that this was the beginning of a mystification in the middle of the street. He was not in a pleasant humor just at that moment. He knit his brows. Laigle de Meaux, imperturbable, continued: "You were not at school yesterday."

"It is possible."

"It is certain."

"You are a student?" inquired Marius.

"Yes, monsieur. Like you. Day before yesterday I happened to go into the school. You know, one sometimes has such notions. The professor was about to call the roll. You know that they are very ridiculous just at that time. If you miss the third call they erase your name. Sixty francs gone."

Marius began to listen. Laigle continued:

"It was Blondeau who was calling the roll. You know Blondeau; he has a very sharp and very malicious nose, and delights in smelling out the absent. He slyly commenced with the letter P. I was not listening, not being concerned in that letter. The roll went on well; no erasure; the universe was present; Blondeau was sad. I said to myself: 'Blondeau, my love, you won't do the slightest execution to-day.' Suddenly Blondeau calls: 'Marius Pontmercy'; nobody answers. Blondeau, full of hope, repeats, louder: 'Marius Pontmercy?' And he seizes his pen. Monsieur, I have bowels. I said to myself, rapidly: 'Here is a brave fellow who is going to be erased. Attention. This is a real live fellow, who is not punctual. He is not a good boy. He is not a book-worm, a student who studies, a white-billed pedant strong on science, letters, theology, and wisdom; one of those numskulls drawn out with four pins; a pin for each faculty. He is an honorable idler, who loafs, who likes to rusticate, who cultivates the grisette, who pays his court to beauty, who is, perhaps, at this very moment with my mistress. Let us save him. Death to Blondeau!' At that moment Blondeau dipped his pen, black with erasures, into the ink, cast his tawny eye over the room, and repeated, for the third time: 'Marius Pontmercy!' I answered: 'Present!' In that way you were not erased."

"Monsieur!" said Marius.

"And I was," added Laigle de Meaux.

"I do not understand you," said Marius.

Laigle resumed: "Nothing more simple. I was near the chair to answer and near the door to escape. The professor was looking at me with a certain fixedness. Suddenly Blondeau, who must be the malignant nose of which Boileau speaks, leaps to the letter L. L is my letter; I am of Meaux, and my name is Lesgle."

"L'Aigle!" interrupted Marius; "what a fine name."

"Monsieur, the Blondeau re-echoes this fine name, and cries: 'Laigle!' I answer: 'Present!' Then Blondeau looks at me with the gentleness of a tiger, smiles and says: 'If you are Pontmercy you are not Laigle.' A phrase which is not complimentary to you, but which brought me only to grief. So saying, he erases me."

Marius exclaimed: "Monsieur, I am mortified—"

"First of all," interrupted Laigle, "I beg leave to embalm Blondeau in a few words of feeling eulogy. I suppose him dead. There wouldn't be much to change in his thinness, his paleness, his coldness, his stiffness, and his odor. And I say: *Erudimini qui judicatis terram*. Here lies Blondeau; Blondeau the nose, Blondeau nasica, the ox of discipline; *bos disciplinæ*, the Molossus of his orders, the angel of the roll, who was straight, square, exact, rigid, honest, and hideous. God has erased him as he erased me."

Marius resumed: "I am very sorry—"

"Young man," said Laigle, of Meaux, "let this be a lesson to you. In future be punctual."

"I really must give you a thousand excuses."

"Never expose yourself again to having your neighbor erased."

"I am very sorry."

Laigle burst out laughing.

"And I, in raptures; I was on the brink of being a lawyer. This rupture saves me. I renounce the triumphs of the bar. I shall not defend the widow and I shall not attack the orphan. No more toga, no more probation. Here is my erasure obtained. It is to you that I owe it, M. Pontmercy. I intend to pay you a solemn visit of thanks. Where do you live?"

"In this cabriolet," said Marius.

"A sign of opulence," replied Laigle calmly. "I congratulate you. You have here rent of 9,000 francs a year."

Just then Courfeyrac came out of the café.

Marius smiled sadly.

"I have been paying this rent for two hours, and I hope to get out of it; but, it is the usual story, I do not know where to go."

"Monsieur," said Courfeyrac, "come home with me."

"I should have priority," observed Laigle, "but I have no home."

"Silence, Bossuet," replied Courfeyrac.

"Bossuet?" said Marius; "but I thought you called yourself Laigle."

"Of Meaux," answered Laigle; "metaphorically, Bossuet."

Courfeyrac got into the cabriolet.

"Driver," said he, "Hôtel de la Porte St. Jacques."

And the same evening Marius was installed in a room at the Hôtel de la Porte St. Jacques, side by side with Courfeyrac.

III

THE ASTONISHMENT OF MARIUS

IN a few days Marius was the friend of Courfeyrac. Youth is the season of prompt weldings and rapid cicatrizations. Marius, in Courfeyrac's presence, breathed freely, a new thing for him. Courfeyrac asked him no questions. He did not even think of it. At that age the countenance tells all at once. Speech is useless. There are some young men of whom we might say their physiognomies are talkative. They look at one another; they know one another.

One morning, however, Courfeyrac abruptly put this question to him: "By the way, have you any political opinions?"

"What do you mean?" said Marius, almost offended at the question.

"What are you?"

"Bonapartist democrat."

"Gray shade of quiet mouse color," said Courfeyrac.

The next day Courfeyrac introduced Marius to the Café Musain. Then he whispered in his ear with a smile: "I must give you your admission into the Revolution." And he took him into the room of the Friends of the A B C. He presented him to the other members, saying in an undertone this simple word, which Marius did not understand: "A pupil."

Marius had fallen into a mental wasp's nest. Still, although silent and serious, he was not the less winged or the less armed.

Marius, up to this time solitary and inclined to soliloquy and privacy by habit and by taste, was a little bewildered at this flock of young men about him. All these different progressives attacked him at once and perplexed him. The tumultuous sweep and sway of all these minds at liberty and at work set his ideas in a whirl. Sometimes in the confusion they went so far from him that he had some difficulty in finding them again. He heard talk of philosophy, of literature, of art, of history, of religion, in a style he had not looked for. He caught glimpses of strange appearances; and as he did not bring them into the perspective he was not sure that it was not a chaos that he saw. On abandoning his grandfather's opinions for his father's he had thought himself settled; he now suspected with anxiety and without daring to confess it to himself that he was not. The angle under which he saw all things was beginning to change anew. A certain oscillation shook the whole horizon of his brain. A strange internal moving day. He almost suffered from it.

It seemed that there were to these young men no "sacred things." Marius heard upon every subject a singular language annoying to his still timid mind.

A theatre poster presented itself, decorated with the title of a tragedy of the old repertory called classic: "Down with tragedy dear to the bourgeois!" cried Bahorel. And Marius heard Combeferre reply: "You are wrong, Bahorel. The bourgeoisie love tragedy, and upon that point we must let the bourgeoisie alone. Tragedy in a wig has its reason for being, and I am not one of those who, in the name of Æschylus, deny it the right of existence. There are rough draughts in nature; there are in creation ready-made parodies; a bill which is not a bill, wings which

are not wings, fins which are not fins, claws which are not claws, a mournful cry which inspires us with a desire to laugh; there is the duck. Now, since the fowl exists along with the bird, I do not see why classic tragedy should not exist in the face of antique tragedy."

At another time Marius happened to be passing through the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau, between Enjolras and Courfeyrac.

Courfeyrac took his arm.

"Give attention. This is the Rue Plâtrière, now called Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau, on account of a singular household which lived on it sixty years ago. It consisted of Jean Jacques and Thérèse. From time to time little creatures were born in it. Thérèse brought them forth, Jean Jacques turned them forth."

And Enjolras replied with severity: "Silence before Jean Jacques! I admire that man. He disowned his children; very well; but he adopted the people."

None of these young men uttered this word: the Emperor. Jean Prouvaire alone sometimes said Napoleon; and all the rest said Bonaparte. Enjolras pronounced "Buonaparte."

Marius became confusedly astonished. *Initium sapientiæ.*

IV

THE BACK ROOM OF THE CAFE MUSAIN

OF the conversations among these young men with whom Marius associated, and in which he sometimes took part, one shocked him severely.

This was held in the back room of the Café Musain. Nearly all the Friends of the A B C were together that evening. The large lamp was ceremoniously lighted. They talked of one thing and another, without passion and with noise. Save Enjolras and Marius, who were silent, each one harangued a little at random. The talk of comrades does sometimes amount to these harmless tumults. It was a play and a fracas as much as a conversation. One threw out words which another caught up. They were talking in each of the four corners.

No woman was admitted into this back room except

Louison, the dish-washer of the café, who passed through it from time to time to go from the washroom to the "laboratory."

Grantaire, perfectly boozy, was deafening the corner of which he had taken possession; he was talking sense and nonsense with all his might; he cried:

"I am thirsty. Mortals, I have a dream: That the tun of Heidelberg has an attack of apoplexy, and that I am the dozen leeches which is to be applied to it. I would like a drink. I desire to forget life. Life is a hideous invention of somebody, I don't know who. It doesn't last, and it is good for nothing. You break your neck to live. Life is a stage scene, in which there is little that is practical. Happiness is an old sash painted on one side. The ecclesiast says: 'All is vanity.' I agree with that good man who perhaps never existed. Zero, not wishing to go entirely naked, has clothed himself in vanity. Oh, vanity! the patching up of everything with big words! A kitchen is a laboratory, a dancer is a professor, a mountebank is a gymnast, a boxer is a pugilist, an apothecary is a chemist, a hod-carrier is an architect, a jockey is a sportsman, a wood-louse is a pterygobranchiate. Vanity has a right side and a wrong side; the right side is stupid, it is the negro with his beads; the wrong side is silly, it is the philosopher with his rags. I weep over one and I laugh over the other. That which is called honors and dignities, and even honor and dignity, is generally pinchbeck. Kings make a plaything of human pride. Caligula made a horse consul; Charles II made a sirloin a knight. Now parade yourselves, then, between the consul Incitatus and the baronet Roastbeef. As to the intrinsic value of people, it is hardly respectable any longer. Listen to the panegyric which neighbors pass upon each other. White is ferocious upon white; should the lily speak, how it would fix out the dove! a bigot gossiping about a devotee is more venomous than the asp and the blue viper. It is a pity that I am ignorant, for I would quote you a crowd of things, but I don't know anything. For instance, I always was bright; when I was a pupil with Gros, instead of daubing pictures, I spent my time in pilfering apples. So much for myself; as for the rest of you, you are just as good as I am. I make fun of your perfections, excel-

lences, and good qualities. Every good quality runs into a defect; economy borders on avarice, the generous are not far from the prodigal, the brave man is close to the bully; he who says very pious says slightly sanctimonious; there are holes in the mantle of Diogenes. Which do you admire, the slain or the slayer, Cæsar or Brutus? People generally are for the slayer. Hurrah for Brutus! he slew. That is virtue. Virtue it may be, but folly also. There are some queer stains on these great men. The Brutus who slew Cæsar was in love with a statue of a little boy. This statue was by the Greek sculptor, Strongylion, who also designed that statue of an Amazon called "The Beautiful-Limbed," Euknemos, which Nero carried with him on his journeys. This Strongylion left nothing but two statues, which put Brutus and Nero in harmony. Brutus was in love with one and Nero with the other. All history is only a long repetition. One century plagiarizes another. The battle of Marengo copies the battle of Pydna; the Tolbach of Clovis and the Austerlitz of Napoleon are as like as two drops of blood. I make little account of victory. Nothing is so stupid as to vanquish; the real glory is to convince. But try now to prove something! you are satisfied with succeeding, what mediocrity! and with conquering, what misery! Alas, vanity and cowardice everywhere. Everything obeys success, even grammar. "*Si volet usus*," says Horace. I despise, therefore, the human race. Shall we descend from the whole to a part? Will you have me set about admiring the peoples? What people, if you please? Greece? The Athenians, those Parisians of old times, killed Phocion, as if we should say Coligny, and fawned upon the tyrants to such a degree that Anacephoras said of Pisistratus: 'His water attracts the bees.' The most considerable man in Greece for fifty years was that grammarian Philetas, who was so small and so thin that he was obliged to put lead on his shoes so as not to be blown away by the wind. There was in the grand square of Corinth a statue by the sculptor Silanion, catalogued by Pliny; this statue represented Episthates. What did Episthates do? He invented the trip in wrestling. This sums up Greece and glory. Let us pass to others. Shall I admire England? Shall I admire France? France? what for? on account of Paris?

I have just told you my opinion of Athens. England? for what? on account of London? I hate Carthage. And then, London, the metropolis of luxury, is the capital of misery. In the single parish of Charing Cross there are a hundred deaths a year from starvation. Such is Albion. I add, as a completion, that I have seen an English girl dance with a crown of roses and blue spectacles. A groan then for England. If I do not admire John Bull shall I admire Brother Jonathan then? I have little taste for this brother with his slaves. Take away 'time is money,' and what is left of England? Take away 'cotton is king,' and what is left of America? Germany is the lymph; Italy is the bile. Shall we go into ecstasies over Russia? Voltaire admired her. He admired China also. I confess that Russia has her beauties, among others a strong despotism; but I am sorry for the despots. They have very delicate health. An Alexis decapitated, a Peter stabbed, a Paul strangled, another Paul trampled down by blows from the heel of a boot, divers Ivans butchered, several Nicholases and Basils poisoned, all that indicates that the palace of the emperors of Russia is in an alarming condition of insalubrity. All civilized nations offer to the admiration of the thinker this circumstance—war; but war, civilized war, exhausts and sums up every form of banditism, from the brigandage of the Trabucaires of the gorges of Mount Jaxa to the marauding of the Comanche Indians in the Doubtful Pass. Pshaw! will you tell me Europe is better than Asia for all that? I admit that Asia is ridiculous; but I do not quite see what right you have to laugh at the Grand Lama, you people of the Occident, who have incorporated into your fashions and your elegancies all the multifarious ordures of majesty, from Queen Isabelle's dirty chemise to the chamber-chair of the Dauphin. Messieurs Humans, I tell you, not a bit of it! It is at Brussels that they consume the most brandy, at Madrid the most chocolate, at Amsterdam the most gin, at London the most wine, at Constantinople the most coffee, at Paris the most absinthe; those are all the useful notions. Paris takes the palm on the whole. In Paris the rag-pickers even are Sybarites; Diogenes would have much rather been a rag-picker in the Place Maubert than a philosopher in the Piræus. Learn this also: the

wine-shops of the rag-pickers are called *bibines*; the most celebrated are the 'Saucepan' and the 'Slaughter-house.' Therefore, oh, drinking-shops, eating-shops, tavern-signs, bar-rooms, tea parties, meat markets, dance-houses, brothels, rag-pickers' tippling-shops, caravanserais of the caliphs, I swear to you I am a voluptuary, I eat at Richard's at forty sous a head, I must have Persian carpets on which to roll Cleopatra naked! Where is Cleopatra? Ah! it is you, Louison. Good-morning."

Thus Grantaire, more than drunk, spread himself out in words, catching up the dish-washer on her way, in his corner of the Musain back-room.

Bossuet, extending his hand, endeavored to impose silence upon him, and Grantaire started again still more beautifully: "Eagle of Meaux, down with your claws. You have no effect upon me with your gesture of Hippocrates refusing his drugs to Artaxerxes. I dispense you from quieting me. Moreover, I am sad. What would you have me tell you? Man is wicked, man is deformed; the butterfly has succeeded, man has missed fire. God failed on this animal. A crowd gives you nothing but choice of ugliness. The first man you meet will be a wretch. *Femme* [woman] rhymes with *infâme* [infamous]. Yes, I have the spleen, in addition to melancholy, with nostalgia, besides hypochondria, and I sneer and I rage and I yawn and I am tired and I am knocked in the head and I am tormented!"

"Silence, Capital R!" broke in Bossuet, who was discussing a point of law aside, and who was more than half-buried in a string of judicial argot, of which here is the conclusion:

"— And, as for me, although I am hardly a legist, and at best an amateur attorney, I maintain this: That by the terms of the common law of Normandy, at St. Michael's, and for every year, an equivalent must be paid for the benefit of the seigneur, saving the rights of others, by each and every of them, as well proprietaries as those seized by inheritance, and this for all terms of years, leases, freeholds, contracts domainiary and domainial, of mortgagees and mortgagors—"

"Echo, plaintive nymph," muttered Grantaire.

Close beside Grantaire, at a table which was almost si-

lent, a sheet of paper, an inkstand, and a pen between two wineglasses announced that a farce was being sketched out. This important business was carried on in a whisper, and the two heads at work touched each other.

"We must begin by finding the names. When we have found the names we will find a subject."

"That is true. Dictate; I will write."

"M. Dorimon."

"Wealthy?"

"Of course."

"His daughter Celestine?"

"——tine. What next?"

"Colonel Sainval."

"Sainval is old. I would say Valsin."

Besides these dramatic aspirants, another group, who also were taking advantage of the confusion to talk privately, were discussing a duel. An old man of thirty was advising a young one of eighteen, and explaining to him what sort of an adversary he had to deal with.

"The devil! Look out for yourself. He is a beautiful sword. His play is neat. He comes to the attack, no lost feints, a pliant wrist, sparkling play, a flash, step exact, and ripostes mathematical. Zounds! and he is left-handed, too."

In the corner opposite to Grantaire, Joly and Bahorel were playing dominoes and talking of love.

"You are lucky," said Joly, "you have a mistress who is always laughing."

"That is a fault of hers," answered Bahorel. "Your mistress does wrong to laugh. It encourages you to deceive her. Seeing her gay takes away your remorse; if you see her sad, your conscience troubles you."

"Ingrate! A laughing woman is so good a thing! And you never quarrel!"

"That is a part of the treaty we have made. When we made our little holy alliance, we assigned to each our own boundary, which we should never pass. What is situated toward the north belongs to Vaud, toward the south to Gex. Hence our peace."

"Peace is happiness digesting."

"And you, Jollilly, how do you come on in your falling out with mamselle—you know who I mean?"

"She sulks with cruel patience."

"So you are a lover pining away."

"Alas!"

"If I were in your place I would get rid of her."

"That is easily said."

"And done. Isn't it Musichetta that she calls herself?"

"Yes. Ah! my poor Bahorel, she is a superb girl, very literary, with small feet, small hands, dresses well, white, plump, and has eyes like a fortune-teller. I am crazy about her."

"My dear fellow, then you must please her, be fashionable and show off your legs. Buy a pair of doeskin pantaloons at Staub's. They yield."

"At what rate?" cried Grantaire.

The third corner had fallen a prey to a poetical discussion. The pagan mythology was wrestling with the Christian mythology. The subject was Olympus, for which Jean Prouvaire, by very romanticism, took sides. Jean Prouvaire was timid only in repose. Once excited, he burst forth, a sort of gayety characterized his enthusiasm, and he was at once laughing and lyric.

"Let us not insult the gods," said he. "The gods, perhaps, have not left us. Jupiter does not strike me as dead. The gods are dreams, say you. Well, even in nature, such as it now is, we find the grand old pagan myths again. Such a mountain, with the profile of a citadel, like the Vignemarle, for instance, is still to me the head-dress of Cybele; it is not proved that Pan does not come at night to blow into the hollow trunks of the willows, while he stops the holes with his fingers one after another; and I have always believed that Io had something to do with the cascade of Pissevache."

In the last corner politics was the subject. They were abusing the charter of Louis XVIII. Combeferre defended it mildly; Courfeyrac was energetically battering it to a breach. There was on the table an unlucky copy of the famous Touquet charter. Courfeyrac caught it up and shook it, mingling with his arguments the rustling of that sheet of paper.

"First, I desire no kings. Were it only from the economical point of view, I desire none; a king is a parasite. We do not have kings gratis. Listen to this: Cost of kings.

At the death of Francis I the public debt of France was 30,000 livres de rente; at the death of Louis XIV it was 2,600,000,000, at 28 livres the mark, which was equivalent, in 1760, according to Desmarest, to 4,500,000,000, and which is equivalent to-day to 12,000,000,000. Secondly, no offence to Combeferre, a charter granted is a vicious expedient of civilization. To avoid the transition, to smooth the passage, to deaden the shock, to make the nation pass insensibly from monarchy to democracy by the practice of constitutional fictions, these are all detestable arguments! No! no! never give the people a false light. Principles wither and grow pale in your constitutional cave. No half measures, no compromises, no grant from the king to the people. In all these grants there is an article 14. Along with the hand which gives there is the claw which takes back. I wholly refuse your charter. A charter is a mask; the lie is beneath it. A people who accept a charter abdicate. Right is right only when entire. No! no charter!"

It was winter; two logs were crackling in the fireplace. It was tempting, and Courfeyrac could not resist. He crushed the poor Touquet charter in his hand, and threw it into the fire. The paper blazed up. Combeferre looked philosophically upon the burning of Louis XVIII's masterpiece, and contented himself with saying: "The charter metamorphosed in flames."

And the sarcasms, the sallies, the jests, that French thing which is called high spirits, that English thing which is called humor, good taste and bad taste, good reasons and bad reasons, all the commingled follies of dialogue, rising at once and crossing from all points of the room, made above their heads a sort of joyous bombardment.

V

ENLARGEMENT OF THE HORIZON.

THE jostlings of young minds against each other have this wonderful attribute, that one can never foresee the spark nor predict the flash. What may spring up in a moment? Nobody knows. A burst of laughter follows a scene of tenderness. In a moment of buffoonery, the

serious makes its entrance. Impulses depend upon a chance word. The spirit of each is sovereign. A jest suffices to open the door to the unlooked-for. Theirs are conferences with sharp turns, where the perspective suddenly changes. Chance is the dictator of these conversations.

A stern thought, oddly brought out of a clatter of words, suddenly crossed the tumult of speech in which Grantaire, Bahorel, Prouvaire, Bossuet, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac were confusedly fencing.

How does a phrase make its way into a dialogue? Whence comes it that it makes its mark all at once upon the attention of those who hear it? We have just said, nobody knows. In the midst of the uproar Bossuet suddenly ended some apostrophe to Combeferre with the date: "The 18th of June, 1815—Waterloo."

At this name Waterloo, Marius, who was leaning on a table with a glass of water by him, took his hand away from under his chin and began to look earnestly about the room.

"Pardieu," exclaimed Courfeyrac—*Parbleu*, at that period, was falling into disuse—"that number 18 is strange and striking to me. It is the fatal number of Bonaparte. Put Louis before and Brumaire behind, you have the whole destiny of the man, with this expressive peculiarity, that the beginning is hard pressed by the end."

Enjolras, till now dumb, broke the silence and thus addressed Courfeyrac.

"You mean the crime by the expiation."

This word "crime" exceeded the limits of the endurance of Marius, already much excited by the abrupt evocation of Waterloo.

He rose. He walked slowly toward the map of France spread out upon the wall, at the bottom of which could be seen an island in a separate compartment. He laid his finger upon this compartment and said: "Corsica. A little island which has made France truly great."

This was a breath of freezing air. All was silent. They felt that now something was to be said.

Bahorel, replying to Bossuet, was just assuming a pet attitude. He gave it up to listen.

Enjolras, whose blue eye was not fixed upon anybody and seemed staring into space, answered without looking at Marius.

"France needs no Corsica to be great. France is great because she is France. '*Quia nominor leo.*'"

Marius felt no desire to retreat. He turned toward Enjolras and his voice rang with a vibration which came from the quivering of his nerves.

"God forbid that I should lessen France! but it is not lessening her to join her with Napoleon. Come, let us talk, then. I am a new-comer among you, but I confess that you astound me. Where are we? Who are we? Who are you? Who am I? Let us explain ourselves about the Emperor. I hear you say 'Buonaparte,' accenting the *u* like the royalists. I can tell you that my grandfather does better yet; he says 'Buonaparté.' I thought you were young men. Where is your enthusiasm, then? and what do you do with it? Whom do you admire if you do not admire the Emperor? and what more must you have? If you do not like that great man what great men would you have? He was everything. He was complete. He had in his brain the cube of human faculties. He made codes like Justinian; he dictated like Cæsar; his conversation joined the lightning of Pascal to the thunderbolt of Tacitus; he made history and he wrote it; his bulletins are Iliads; he combined the figures of Newton with the metaphors of Mohammed; he left behind him in the Orient words as grand as the pyramids; at Tilsit he taught majesty to emperors; at the Academy of Sciences he replied to Laplace; in the council of state he held his ground with Merlin; he gave a soul to the geometry of those and to the trickery of these; he was legal with the attorneys and side-real with the astronomers; like Cromwell blowing out one candle when two were lighted, he went to the temple to cheapen a curtain tassel; he saw everything; he knew everything; which did not prevent him from laughing a good man's laugh by the cradle of his little child; and all at once startled Europe listened, armies set themselves in march, parks of artillery rolled along, bridges of boats stretched over the rivers, clouds of cavalry galloped in the hurricane, cries, trumpets, a trembling of thrones everywhere, the frontiers of the kingdoms oscillated upon the

map, the sound of a superhuman blade was heard leaping from its sheath, men saw him—him, standing erect in the horizon with a flame in his hands and a resplendence in his eyes, unfolding in the thunder his two wings, the grand army and the old guard, and he was the archangel of war!”

All were silent, and Enjolras bowed his head. Silence always has something of the effect of an acquiescence or of a sort of pushing to the wall. Marius, almost without taking breath, continued with a burst of enthusiasm:

“Be just, my friends! To be the Empire of such an Emperor, what a splendid destiny for a people when that people is France and when it adds its genius to the genius of such a man! To appear and to reign; to march and to triumph; to have every capital for a magazine; to take his grenadiers and make kings of them; to decree the downfall of dynasties; to transfigure Europe at a double-quick step, so that men feel, when you threaten, that you lay your hand on the hilt of the sword of God; to follow, in a single man, Hannibal, Cæsar, and Charlemagne; to be the people of one who mingles with your every dawn the glorious announcement of a battle gained; to be wakened in the morning by the cannon of the Invalides; to hurl into the vault of day mighty words which blaze forever—Marengo, Arcola, Austerlitz, Jena, Wagram; to call forth at every moment constellations of victories in the zenith of the centuries; to make the French Empire the successor of the Roman Empire; to be the grand nation and to bring forth the grand army; to send your legions flying over the whole earth as a mountain sends its eagles upon all sides; to vanquish, to rule, to thunderstrike, to be in Europe a kind of gilded people through much glory; to sound through history a Titan trumpet-call; to conquer the world twice, by conquest and by resplendence—this is sublime; and what can be more grand?”

“To be free,” said Combeferre.

Marius, in his turn, bowed his head; these cold and simple words had pierced his epic effusion like a blade of steel, and he felt it vanish within him. When he raised his eyes Combeferre was there no longer. Satisfied, probably, with his reply to the apotheosis, he had gone out, and all, except Enjolras, had followed him. The room was

empty. Enjolras, remaining alone with Marius, was looking at him seriously. Marius, meanwhile, having rallied his ideas a little, did not consider himself beaten; there was still something left of the ebullition within him which doubtless was about to find expression in syllogisms arrayed against Enjolras, when suddenly they heard somebody singing as he was going downstairs. It was Combeferre, and what he was singing is this:

“Si César m’avait donné
 La gloire et la guerre,
 Et qu’il me fallût quitter
 L’amour de ma mère,
 Je dirais au grand César:
 ‘Reprends ton sceptre et ton char,
 J’aime mieux ma mère, ô guè!
 J’aime mieux ma mère.’ ” *

The wild and tender accent with which Combeferre sang gave to this stanza a strange grandeur. Marius, thoughtful and with his eyes directed to the ceiling, repeated almost mechanically: “My mother—”

At this moment he felt Enjolras’s hand on his shoulder. “Citizen,” said Enjolras to him: “my mother is the Republic.”

VI

RES ANGUSTA

THAT evening left Marius in a profound agitation, with a sorrowful darkness in his soul. He was experiencing what perhaps the earth experiences at the moment when it is furrowed with the share that the grains of wheat may be sown; it feels the wound alone; the thrill of the germ and the joy of the fruit do not come until later.

* “If Cæsar had given me
 Glory and war,
 And if I must abandon
 The love of my mother,
 I would say to great Cæsar:
 ‘Take thy sceptre and car,
 I prefer my mother, ah me!
 I prefer my mother.’ ”

Marius was gloomy. He had but just attained a faith; could he so soon reject it? He decided within himself that he could not. He declared to himself that he would not doubt, and he began to doubt in spite of himself. To be between two religions, one which you have not yet abandoned, and another which you have not yet adopted, is insupportable; and twilight is pleasant only to bat-like souls. Marius's was an open eye, and he needed the true light. To him the dusk of doubt was harmful. Whatever might be his desire to stop where he was, and to hold fast there, he was irresistibly compelled to continue, to advance, to examine, to think, to go forward. Where was that going to lead him? He feared, after having taken so many steps which had brought him nearer to his father, to take now any steps which should separate them. His dejection increased with every reflection which occurred to him. Steep cliffs rose about him. He was on good terms neither with his grandfather nor with his friends; rash toward the former, backward toward the others; and he felt doubly isolated, from old age and also from youth. He went no more to the Café Musain.

In this trouble in which his mind was plunged he scarcely gave a thought to certain serious phases of existence. The realities of life do not allow themselves to be forgotten. They came and jogged his memory sharply.

One morning the keeper of the house entered Marius's room and said to him: "M. Courfeyrac is responsible for you."

"Yes."

"But I am in need of money."

"Ask Courfeyrac to come and speak with me," said Marius.

Courfeyrac came; the host left them. Marius related to him what he had not thought of telling him before, that he was, so to speak, alone in the world, without any relatives.

"What are you going to become?" said Courfeyrac.

"I have no idea," answered Marius.

"What are you going to do?"

"I have no idea."

"Have you any money?"

"Fifteen francs."

"Do you wish me to lend you some?"

"Never."

"Have you any clothes?"

"What you see."

"Have you any jewelry?"

"A watch."

"A silver one?"

"Gold; here it is."

"I know a dealer in clothing who will take your overcoat and one pair of trousers."

"That is good."

"You will then have but one pair of trousers, one waistcoat, one hat, and one coat."

"And my boots."

"What? you will not go barefoot? What opulence!"

"That will be enough."

"I know a watchmaker who will buy your watch."

"That is good."

"No, it is not good. What will you do afterward?"

"What I must. Anything honorable, at least."

"Do you know English?"

"No."

"Do you know German?"

"No."

"That is bad."

"Why?"

"Because a friend of mine, a bookseller, is making a sort of encyclopedia, for which you could have translated German or English articles. It is poor pay, but it gives a living."

"I will learn English and German."

"And in the meantime?"

"In the meantime I will eat my coats and my watch."

The clothes dealer was sent for. He gave twenty francs for the clothes. They went to the watchmaker. He gave forty-five francs for the watch.

"That is not bad," said Marius to Courfeyrac, on returning to the house; "with my fifteen francs this makes eighty francs."

"The hotel bill?" observed Courfeyrac.

"Ah! I forgot," said Marius.

The host presented his bill, which must be paid on the spot. It amounted to seventy francs.

"I have ten francs left," said Marius.

"The devil," said Courfeyrac: "you will have five francs to eat while you are learning English, and five francs while you are learning German. That will be swallowing a language very rapidly or a 100-sou piece very slowly."

Meanwhile Aunt Gillenormand, who was really a kind person on sad occasions, had finally unearthed Marius's lodgings.

One morning when Marius came home from the school he found a letter from his aunt, and the sixty pistoles, that is to say, six hundred francs in gold, in a sealed box.

Marius sent the thirty louis back to his aunt, with a respectful letter, in which he told her that he had the means of living, and that he could provide henceforth for all his necessities. At that time he had three francs left.

The aunt did not inform the grandfather of this refusal, lest it should exasperate him. Indeed, had he not said: "Let nobody ever speak to me of this blood-drinker."

Marius left the Porte St. Jacques Hotel, unwilling to contract debt.

BOOK FIFTH—THE EXCELLENCE OF MISFORTUNE

I

MARIUS NEEDY

LIFE became stern to Marius. To eat his coats and his watch was nothing. He chewed that inexpressible thing which is called "the cud of bitterness." A horrible thing, which includes days without bread, nights without sleep, evenings without a candle, a hearth without a fire, weeks without labor, a future without hope, a coat out at the elbows, an old hat which makes young girls laugh, the door found shut against you at night because you have not paid your rent, the insolence of the porter and the landlord, the jibes of neighbors, humiliations, self-respect outraged.

any drudgery acceptable, disgust, bitterness, prostration—Marius learned how one swallows down all these things, and how they are often the only things that one has to swallow. At that period of existence, when man has need of pride because he has need of love, he felt that he was mocked at because he was badly dressed and ridiculed because he was poor. At the age when youth swells the heart with an imperial pride, he more than once dropped his eyes upon his wornout boots, and experienced the undeserved shame and the poignant blushes of misery. Wonderful and terrible trial, from which the feeble come out infamous, from which the strong come out sublime. Crucible into which destiny casts a man whenever she desires a scoundrel or a demigod.

For there are many great deeds done in the small struggles of life. There is a determined, though unseen, bravery which defends itself foot to foot in the darkness against the fatal invasions of necessity and of baseness. Noble and mysterious triumphs which no eye sees, which no renown rewards, which no flourish of trumpets salutes. Life, misfortune, isolation, abandonment, poverty, are battlefields which have their heroes; obscure heroes, sometimes greater than the illustrious heroes.

Strong and rare natures are thus created; misery, almost always a stepmother, is sometimes a mother; privation gives birth to power of soul and mind; distress is the nurse of self-respect; misfortune is a good breast for great souls.

There was a period in Marius's life when he swept his own hall, when he bought a pennyworth of Brie cheese at the market-woman's, when he waited for nightfall to make his way to the baker's and buy a loaf of bread, which he carried furtively to his garret as if he had stolen it. Sometimes there was seen to glide into the corner meat-market, in the midst of the jeering cooks who elbowed him, an awkward young man, with books under his arm, who had a timid and frightened appearance, and who, as he entered, took off his hat from his forehead, which was dripping with sweat, made a low bow to the astonished butcher, another bow to the butcher's boy, asked for a mutton cutlet, paid six or seven sous for it, wrapped it up in paper, put it under his arm between two books and

went away. It was Marius. On this cutlet, which he cooked himself, he lived three days.

The first day he ate the meat; the second day he ate the fat; the third day he gnawed the bone. On several occasions Aunt Gillenormand made overtures and sent him the sixty pistoles. Marius always sent them back, saying that he had no need of anything.

He was still in mourning for his father when the revolution which we have described was accomplished in his ideas. Since then, he had never left off black clothes. His clothes left him, however. A day came at last when he had no coat. His trousers were going also. What was to be done? Courfeyrac, for whom he also had done some good turns, gave him an old coat. For thirty sous Marius had it turned by some porter or other, and it was a new coat. But this coat was green. Then Marius did not go out till after nightfall. That made his coat black. Desiring always to be in mourning, he clothed himself with night.

Through all this he procured admission to the bar. He was reputed to occupy Courfeyrac's room, which was decent, and where a certain number of law books, supported and filled out by some odd volumes of novels, made up the library required by the rules.

When Marius had become a lawyer he informed his grandfather of it in a letter which was frigid, but full of submission and respect. M. Gillenormand took the letter with trembling hands, read it, and threw it, torn in pieces, into the basket. Two or three days afterward Mdlle. Gillenormand overheard her father, who was alone in his room, talking aloud. This was always the case when he was much excited. She listened; the old man said: "If you were not a fool, you would know that a man can not be a baron and a lawyer at the same time."

II

MARIUS POOR

IT is with misery as with everything else. It gradually becomes endurable. It ends by taking form and becoming fixed. You vegetate, that is to say, you develop in some wretched fashion but sufficient for existence.

This is the way in which Marius Pontmercy's life was arranged.

He had got out of the narrowest place; the pass widened a little before him. By dint of hard work, courage, perseverance, and will, he had succeeded in earning by his labor about seven hundred francs a year. He had learned German and English, thanks to Courfeyrac, who introduced him to his friend, the publisher. Marius filled, in the literary department of the book-house, the usual rôle of "utility." He made out prospectuses, translated from the journals, annotated republications, compiled biographies, etc.; net result, year in and year out, 700 francs. He lived on this. How! Not badly. We are going to tell.

Marius occupied, at an annual rent of thirty francs, a wretched little room in the Gorbeau tenement, with no fireplace, called a cabinet, in which there was no more furniture than was indispensable. The furniture was his own. He gave three francs a month to the old woman, who had charge of the building, for sweeping his room and bringing him every morning a little warm water, a fresh egg, and a penny loaf of bread. On this loaf and this egg he breakfasted. His breakfast varied from two to four sous, as eggs were cheap or dear. At six o'clock in the evening he went down into the Rue St. Jacques to dine at Rousseau's, opposite Basset's, the print dealer's, at the corner of the Rue des Mathurins. He ate no soup. He took a six-sou plate of meat, a three-sou half-plate of vegetables, and a three-sou dessert. For three sous, as much bread as he liked. As for wine, he drank water. On paying at the counter, where Mme. Rousseau was seated majestically, still plump and fresh also in those days, he gave one sou to the waiter, and Mme. Rousseau gave him a smile. Then he went away. For sixteen sous he had a smile and a dinner.

This Rousseau restaurant, where so few bottles and so many pitchers were emptied, was rather an appeasant than a restaurant. It is not kept now. The master had a fine title; he was called Rousseau the Aquatic.

Thus, breakfast 4 sous, dinner 16 sous, his food cost him 20 sous a day, which was 365 francs a year. Add the 30 francs for his lodging, and the 36 francs to the old woman, and a few other trifling expenses, and for 450

frances Marius was fed, lodged, and waited upon. His clothes cost him 100 francs, his linen 50 francs, his washing 50 francs; the whole did not exceed 650 francs. This left him 50 francs. He was rich. He occasionally lent 10 francs to a friend; Courfeyrac borrowed 60 of him once. As for fire, having no fireplace, Marius had "simplified" it.

Marius always had two complete suits, one old, "for every day," the other quite new, for special occasions. Both were black. He had but three shirts, one he had on, another in the drawer, the third at the washerwoman's. He renewed them as they wore out. They were usually ragged, so he buttoned his coat to his chin.

For Marius to arrive at this flourishing condition had required years. Hard years, difficult ones; those to get through, these to climb. Marius had never given up for a single day. He had undergone everything in the shape of privation; he had done everything except get into debt. He gave himself this credit, that he had never owed a sou to anybody. For him a debt was the beginning of slavery. He felt even that a creditor is worse than a master; for a master owns only your person, a creditor owns your dignity, and can belabor that. Rather than borrow, he did not eat. He had many days of fasting. Feeling that all extremes meet, and that if we do not take care, abasement of fortune may lead to baseness of soul, he watched jealously over his pride. Such a habit or such a carriage as, in any other condition, would have appeared deferential, seemed humiliating, and he braced himself against it. He risked nothing, not wishing to take a backward step. He had a kind of stern blush upon his face. He was timid, even to rudeness.

In all his trials he felt encouraged, and sometimes even upborne by a secret force within. The soul helps the body, and at certain moments uplifts it. It is the only bird which sustains its cage.

By the side of his father's name, another name was engraven upon Marius's heart. The name of Thenardier. Marius, in his enthusiastic yet serious nature, surrounded with a sort of halo the man to whom, as he thought, he owed his father's life, the brave sergeant who had saved the colonel in the midst of the balls and bullets of Water-

loo. He never separated the memory of this man from the memory of his father, and he associated them in his veneration. It was a sort of worship with two steps, the high altar for the colonel, the low one for Thenardier. The idea of the misfortune into which he knew that Thenardier had fallen and been engulfed intensified his feeling of gratitude. Marius had learned at Montfermeil of the ruin and bankruptcy of the unlucky innkeeper. Since then he had made untold efforts to get track of him, and to endeavor to find him in that dark abyss of misery in which Thenardier had disappeared. Marius had beaten the whole country; he had been to Chelles, to Bondy, to Gournay, to Nogent, to Lagny. For three years he had been devoted to this, spending in these explorations what little money he could spare. Nobody could give him any news of Thenardier; it was thought he had gone abroad. His creditors had sought for him, also, with less love than Marius, but with as much zeal, and had not been able to put their hands on him. Marius blamed and almost hated himself for not succeeding in his researches. This was the only debt which the colonel had left him, and Marius made it a point of honor to pay it. "What," thought he, "when my father lay dying on the field of battle, Thenardier could find him through the smoke and the grape, and bring him off on his shoulders, and yet he owed him nothing; while I, who owe so much to Thenardier, can not reach him in that darkness in which he is suffering, and restore him, in my turn, from death to life. Oh, I will find him!" Indeed, to find Thenardier Marius would have given one of his arms, and to save him from wretchedness all his blood. To see Thenardier, to render some service to Thenardier, to say to him: "You do not know me, but I do know you. Here I am, dispose of me!" This was the sweetest and most magnificent dream of Marius.

III

MARIUS A MAN

MARIUS was now twenty years old. It was three years since he had left his grandfather. They remained on the same terms on both sides, without attempting a reconciliation, and without seeking to meet. And,

indeed, what was the use of meeting? to come in conflict? Which would have the best of it? Marius was a vase of brass, but M. Gillenormand was an iron pot.

To tell the truth, Marius was mistaken as to his grandfather's heart. He imagined that M. Gillenormand had never loved him, and that this crusty and harsh, yet smiling, old man, who swore, screamed, stormed, and lifted his cane, felt for him at most only the affection, at once slight and severe, of the old men of comedy. Marius was deceived. There are fathers who do not love their children; there is no grandfather who does not adore his grandson. In reality, we have said, M. Gillenormand worshiped Marius. He worshiped him in his own way, with an accompaniment of cuffs, and even of blows; but when the child was gone he felt a dark void in his heart; he ordered that nobody should speak of him again, and regretted that he was so well obeyed. At first he hoped that this Bonapartist, this Jacobin, this Terrorist, this Septembrist, would return. But weeks passed away, months passed away, years passed away; to the great despair of M. Gillenormand, the blood-drinker did not reappear! "But I could not do anything else but turn him away," said the grandfather, and he asked himself: "If it were to be done again, would I do it?" His pride promptly answered, "Yes," but his old head, which he shook in silence, sadly answered, "No." He had his hours of dejection. He missed Marius. Old men need affection as they do sunshine. It is warmth. However strong his nature might be, the absence of Marius had changed something in him. For nothing in the world would he have taken a step toward the "little rogue"; but he suffered. He never inquired after him, but he thought of him constantly. He lived, more and more retired, in the Marais. He was still, as formerly, gay and violent, but his gayety had a convulsive harshness as if it contained grief and anger, and his burst of violence always terminated by a sort of placid and gloomy exhaustion. He said sometimes: "Oh! if he would come back what a good box of the ear I would give him."

As for the aunt, she thought too little to love very much; Marius was now nothing to her but a sort of dim, dark outline; and she finally busied herself a good deal less

about him than with the cat or the parouquet which she probably had. What increased the secret suffering of Grandfather Gillenormand was that he shut her entirely out and let her suspect nothing of it. His chagrin was like those newly invented furnaces which consume their own smoke. Sometimes it happened that some blundering, officious body would speak to him of Marius, and ask: "What is your grandson doing, or what has become of him," The old bourgeois would answer with a sigh if he was too sad, or, giving his ruffle a tap, if he wished to seem gay: "Monsieur, the Baron Pontmercy is pettifogging in some hole."

While the old man was regretting Marius was rejoicing. As with all good hearts, suffering had taken away his bitterness. He thought of M. Gillenormand only with kindness, but he had determined to receive nothing more from the man "who had been cruel to his father." This was now the softened translation of his first indignation. Moreover, he was happy in having suffered, and in suffering still. "It was for his father." His hard life satisfied him and pleased him. He said to himself with a sort of pleasure that—"it was the very least"; that it was an expiation; that—save for this he would have been punished otherwise and later, for his unnatural indifference toward his father, and toward such a father—that it would not have been just that his father should have had all the suffering, and himself none—what were his efforts and his privation, moreover, compared with the heroic life of the colonel? that finally his only way of drawing near his father and becoming like him was to be valiant against indigence as he had been brave against the enemy; and that this was doubtless what the colonel meant by the words: "He will be worthy of it." Words which Marius continued to bear, not upon his breast, the colonel's paper having disappeared, but in his heart.

And then, when his grandfather drove him away, he was but a child; now he was a man. He felt it. Misery, we must insist, had been good to him. Poverty in youth, when it succeeds, is so far magnificent that it turns the whole will toward effort, and the whole soul toward aspiration. Poverty strips the material life entirely bare, and makes it hideous; thence arise inexpressible yearn-

ings toward the ideal life. The rich young man has a hundred brilliant and coarse amusements—racing, hunting, dogs, cigars, gaming, feasting, and the rest; busying the lower portions of the soul at the expense of its higher and delicate portions. This poor young man must work for his bread; he eats; when he has eaten, he has nothing more but reverie. He goes free to the play which God gives; he beholds the sky, space, the stars, the flowers, the children, the humanity in which he suffers, the creation in which he shines. He looks at humanity so much that he sees the soul, he looks at creation so much that he sees God. He dreams, he feels that he is great; he dreams again, and he feels that he is tender. From the egotism of the suffering man he passes to the compassion of the contemplating man. A wonderful feeling springs up within him, forgetfulness of self, and pity for all. In thinking of the numberless enjoyments which nature offers, gives, and gives lavishly to open souls, and refuses to closed souls, he, a millionaire of intelligence, comes to grieve for the millionaires of money. All hatred goes out of his heart in proportion as all light enters his mind. And then is he unhappy? No. The misery of a young man is never miserable. The first lad you meet, poor as he may be, with his health, his strength, his quick step, his shining eyes, his blood which circulates warmly, his black locks, his fresh cheeks, his rosy lips, his white teeth, his pure breath, will always be envied by an old emperor. And then every morning he sets about earning his bread; and while his hands are earning his living his backbone is gaining firmness, his brain is gaining ideas. When his work is done he returns to ineffable ecstasies, to contemplation, to joy; he sees his feet in difficulties, in obstacles, on the pavement, in thorns, sometimes in the mire; his head is in the light. He is firm, serene, gentle, peaceful, attentive, serious, content with little, benevolent; and he blesses God for having given him these two estates which many of the rich are without; labor which makes him free, and thought which makes him noble.

This is what had taken place in Marius. He had even, to tell the truth, gone a little too far on the side of contemplation. The day on which he had arrived at the point of being almost sure of earning his living, he stopped

there, preferring to be poor, and retrenching from labor to give to thought. That is to say, he passed sometimes whole days in thinking, plunged and swallowed up like a visionary, in the mute joys of ecstasy and interior radiance. He had put the problem of his life thus: to work as little as possible at material labor, that he might work as much as possible at impalpable labor; in other words, to give a few hours to real life, and to cast the rest into the Infinite. He did not perceive, thinking that he lacked nothing, that contemplation thus obtained comes to be one of the forms of sloth, that he was content with subduing the primary necessities of life, and that he was resting too soon.

It was clear that, for his energetic and generous nature, this could only be a transitory state, and that at the first shock against the inevitable complication of destiny, Marius would arouse.

Meantime, although he was a lawyer, and whatever Grandfather Gillenormand might think, he was not pleading, he was not even pettifogging. Reverie had turned him away from the law. To consort with attorneys, to attend courts, to hunt up cases, was wearisome. Why should he do it? He saw no reason for changing his business. This cheap and obscure book-making had procured him sure work, work with little labor, which, as we have explained, was sufficient for him.

One of the booksellers for whom he worked, M. Magimel, I think, had offered to take him home, give him a good room, furnish him regular work, and pay him 1,500 francs a year. To have a good room! 1,500 francs! Very well. But to give up his liberty! to work for a salary, to be a kind of literary clerk. In Marius' opinion, to accept would make his position better and worse at the same time; he would gain in comfort and lose in dignity, it was a complete and beautiful misfortune given up for an ugly and ridiculous constraint; something like a blind man who should gain one eye. He refused.

Marius' life was solitary. From his taste for remaining outside of everything, and also from having been startled by its excesses, he had decided not to enter the group presided over by Enjolras. They had remained good friends; they were ready to help one another, if need be, in all possible ways; but nothing more. Marius had two

friends; one young, Courfeyrac, and one old, M. Mabeuf. He inclined toward the old one. First, he was indebted to him for the revolution through which he had gone; he was indebted to him for having known and loved his father. "He operated upon me for the cataract," said he.

Certainly, this churchwarden had been decisive.

M. Mabeuf was not, however, on that occasion anything more than the calm and passive agent of Providence. He had enlightened Marius accidentally and without knowing it, as a candle does which somebody carries; he had been the candle and not the somebody.

As to the interior political revolution in Marius, M. Mabeuf was entirely incapable of comprehending it, desiring it, or directing it.

As we shall meet M. Mabeuf hereafter a few words will not be useless.

IV

M. MABEUF

THE day that M. Mabeuf said to Marius: "Certainly, I approve of political opinions," he expressed the real condition of his mind. All political opinions were indifferent to him, and he approved them all without distinction, provided they left him quiet, as the Greeks called the Furies: "The beautiful, the good, the charming," the *Eumenides*. M. Mabeuf's political opinion was a passionate fondness for plants and a still greater one for books. He had, like everybody else, his termination in *ist*, without which nobody could have lived in those times, but he was neither a Royalist nor a Bonapartist nor a Chartist nor an Orleanist nor an anarchist; he was an old bookist.

He did not understand how men could busy themselves with hating one another about such bubbles as the charter, democracy, legitimacy, the Monarchy, the Republic, etc., when there were in this world all sorts of mosses, herbs, and shrubs, which they could look at, and piles of folios and even of 32mos which they could pore over. He took good care not to be useless; having books did not prevent him from reading, being a botanist did not prevent him from being a gardener. When he knew Pontmercy there was this sympathy between the colonel and himself that

what the colonel did for flowers he did for fruits. M. Mabeuf had succeeded in producing seedling pears as highly flavored as the pears of St. Germain; to one of his combinations, as it appears, we owe the October Mirabelle, now famous, and not less fragrant than the Summer Mirabelle. He went to Mass rather from good-feeling than from devotion, and because he loved the faces of men, but hated their noise, and he found them, at church only, gathered together and silent. Feeling that he ought to be something in the government, he had chosen the career of a churchwarden. Finally, he had never succeeded in loving any woman as much as a tulip bulb, or any man as much as an Elzevir.

He had long passed his sixtieth year, when one day somebody asked him: "Where you never married?" "I forget," said he. When he happened sometimes—to whom does it not happen?—to say: "Oh! if I were rich," it was not upon ogling a pretty girl, like M. Gillenormand, but upon seeing an old book. He lived alone with an old governess. He was a little gouty, and when he slept his old fingers, stiffened with rheumatism, were clinched in the folds of the clothes. He had written and published a "Flora of the Environs of Cauteretz," with colored illustrations, a highly esteemed work, the plates of which he owned and which he sold himself. People came two or three times a day and rang his bell, in the Rue Mézières, for it. He received fully 2,000 francs a year for it; this was nearly all his income. Though poor, he had succeeded in gathering together, by means of patience, self-denial, and time, a valuable collection of rare copies on every subject. He never went out without a book under his arm, and he often came back with two. The only decoration of the four ground-floor rooms which, with a small garden, formed his dwelling, were some framed herbariums and a few engravings of old masters. The sight of a sword or a gun chilled him. In his whole life he had never been near a cannon, even at the Invalides. He had a passable stomach, a brother who was curé, hair entirely white, no teeth left either in his mouth or in his mind, a tremor of the whole body, a Picard accent, a child-like laugh, weak nerves, and the appearance of an old sheep. With all that, no other friend nor any other intimate acquaintance among the living but

an old bookseller of the Porte St. Jacques named Royol. His mania was the naturalization of indigo in France.

His servant was, also, a peculiar variety of innocence. The poor, good old woman was a maid. Sultan, her cat, who could have miauled the miserere of Allegri at the Sistine Chapel, had filled her heart, and sufficed for the amount of passion which she possessed. None of her dreams went as far as man. She had never got beyond her cat. She had, like him, mustaches. Her glory was in the whiteness of her caps. She spent her time on Sunday after Mass in counting her linen in her trunk, and in spreading out upon her bed the dresses in the piece which she had bought and never made up. She could read. M. Mabeuf had given her the name of Mother Plutarch.

M. Mabeuf took Marius into favor, because Marius, being young and gentle, warmed his old age without arousing his timidity. Youth, with gentleness, has upon old men the effect of sunshine without wind. When Marius was full of military glory, gunpowder, marches, and countermarches, and all those wonderful battles in which his father had given and received such huge sabre strokes, he went to see M. Mabeuf, and M. Mabeuf talked with him about the hero from the floricultural point of view.

Toward 1830 his brother the curé died, and almost immediately after, as at the coming on of night, the whole horizon of M. Mabeuf was darkened. By a failure—of a notary—he lost 10,000 francs, which was all the money that he possessed in his brother's name and his own. The Revolution of July brought on a crisis in bookselling. In hard times the first thing that does not sell is a "Flora." "The Flora of the Environs of Cauteretz" stopped short. Weeks went by without a purchaser. Sometimes M. Mabeuf would start at the sound of the bell. "Monsieur," Mother Plutarch would say sadly, "it is the water-porter." In short, M. Mabeuf left the Rue Mézières one day, resigned his place as churchwarden, gave up St. Sulpice, sold a part, not of his books, but of his prints—what he prized the least—and installed himself in a little house on the Boulevard Mont Parnasse, where, however, he remained but one quarter, for two reasons; first, the ground floor and the garden let for 300 francs, and he did not dare to spend

more than 200 francs for his tent; secondly, being near the Fatou shooting-gallery, he heard pistol-shots, which was insupportable to him.

He carried off his "Flora," his plates, his herbariums, his portfolios and his books, and established himself near La Salpêtrière in a sort of cottage in the village of Austerlitz, where at 50 crowns a year he had three rooms, a garden inclosed with a hedge, and a well. He took advantage of this change to sell nearly all his furniture. The day of his entrance into this new dwelling he was very gay, and drove the nails himself on which to hang the engravings and the herbariums. He dug in his garden the rest of the day, and in the evening, seeing that Mother Plutarch had a gloomy and thoughtful air, he tapped her on the shoulder and said, with a smile: "We have the indigo."

Only two visitors, the bookseller of the Porte St. Jacques and Marius, were admitted to his cottage at Austerlitz, a tumultuous name, which was, to tell the truth, rather disagreeable to him.

However, as we have just indicated, brains absorbed in wisdom or in folly, or, as often happens, in both at once, are but very slowly permeable by the affairs of life. Their own destiny is far from them. There results from such concentrations of mind a passivity which, if it were due to reason, would resemble philosophy. We decline, we descend, we fall, we are even overthrown, and we hardly perceive it. This always ends, it is true, by an awakening, but a tardy one. In the meantime, it seems as though we were neutral in the game which is being played between our good and our ill fortune. We are the stake, yet we look upon the contest with indifference.

Thus it was that amid this darkness which was gathering about him, all his hopes going out one after another, M. Mabeuf had remained serene, somewhat childishly, but very thoroughly. His habits of mind had the swing of a pendulum. Once wound up by an illusion, he went a very long time, even when the illusion had disappeared. A clock does not stop at the very moment you lose the key.

M. Mabeuf had some innocent pleasures. These pleasures were cheap and unlooked for; the least chance furnished them. One day Mme. Plutarch was reading a

romance in one corner of the room. She read aloud, as she understood better so. To read aloud is to assure yourself of what you are reading. There are people who read very loud, and who appear to be giving their word of honor for what they are reading.

It was with that kind of energy that Mother Plutarch was reading the romance she held in her hand. M. Mabeuf heard, but was not listening.

As she read Mother Plutarch came to this passage. It was about an officer of dragoons and a belle:

"The belle *bouda* [pouted] and the *dragon* [dragon]——"

Here she stopped to wipe her spectacles.

"'Bouda and the dragon,'" said M. Mabeuf, in an undertone. "Yes, it is true, there was a dragon, who, from the depth of his cave, belched forth flames from his jaws and was burning up the sky. Several stars had already been set on fire by this monster, who, besides, had claws like a tiger. Bouda went into his cave and succeeded in converting the dragon. That is a good book which you are reading there, Mother Plutarch. There is no more beautiful legend."

And M. Mabeuf fell into a delicious reverie.

V

POVERTY A GOOD NEIGHBOR OF MISERY

MARIUS had a liking for this open-hearted old man, who saw that he was being slowly seized by indigence, and who had come gradually to be astonished at it, without, however, as yet, becoming sad. Marius met Courfeyrac, and went to see M. Mabeuf. Very rarely, however; once or twice a month, at most. It was Marius' delight to take long walks alone on the outer boulevards, or in the Champ de Mars, or in the less frequented walks of the Luxembourg. He sometimes spent half a day in looking at a vegetable garden, at the beds of salad, the fowls on the dung-heap, and the horse turning the wheel at the pump. The passers-by looked at him with surprise, and some thought that he had a suspicious appearance and an ill-omened manner. He was only a poor young man, dreaming without an object.

It was in one of these walks that he had discovered the Gorbeau tenement, and, its isolation and cheapness being an attraction to him, he had taken a room in it. He was only known in it by the name of M. Marius.

Some of the old generals or of the old companions of his father had invited him, when they had made his acquaintance, to come and see them. Marius did not refuse. These were opportunities to talk about his father. He went thus from time to time to Count Pajol's, to General Bellavesne's, to General Fririon's, to the Invalides. They had music and dancing. On such evenings, Marius wore his new coat. But he never went to these soirées or balls except when the ground was frozen like a rock, for he could not afford a carriage, and he did not like to go unless his boots shone like mirrors.

He sometimes said, but without bitterness: "Mankind is so constituted that, in a parlor, your whole dress may be soiled except your shoes. In order to be well received but one irreproachable thing is requisite—conscience? no, boots."

All passions except those of the heart are dissipated by reverie. Marius' political fevers were over. The Revolution of 1830, by satisfying him, and soothing him, had aided in this. He remained the same, with the exception of his passionateness. He had still the same opinions. But they were softened. Properly speaking, he held opinions no longer; he had sympathies. Of what party was he? Of the party of humanity. Out of humanity he chose France; out of the nation he chose the people; out of the people he chose woman. To her, above all, his pity went out. He now preferred an idea to a fact, a poet to a hero, and he admired a book like Job still more than an event like Marengo. And then, when, after a day of meditation, he returned at night along the boulevards, and saw through the branches of the trees the fathomless space, the nameless lights, the depths, the darkness, the mystery, all that which is only human seemed to him very petty.

He thought he had, and he had, perhaps, in fact, arrived at the truth of life and of human philosophy, and he had finally come hardly to look at anything but the sky, the only thing that truth can see from the bottom of her well.

This did not hinder him from multiplying plans, combi-

nations, scaffoldings, projects for the future. In this condition of reverie, an eye which could have looked into Marius' soul would have been dazzled by its purity. In fact, were it given to our eye of flesh to see into the consciences of others, we should judge a man much more surely from what he dreams than from what he thinks. There is will in the thought, there is none in the dream. The dream, which is completely spontaneous, takes and keeps, even in the gigantic and the ideal, the form of our mind. Nothing springs more directly and more sincerely from the very bottom of our souls than our unreflected and indefinite aspirations toward the splendors of destiny. In these aspirations much more than in ideas which are combined, studied and compared, we can find the true character of each man. Our chimeras are what most resemble ourselves. Each one dreams the unknown and the impossible according to his own nature.

Toward the middle of this year, 1831, the old woman who waited upon Marius told him that his neighbors, the wretched Jondrette family, were to be turned into the street. Marius, who passed almost all his days out of doors, hardly knew that he had any neighbors.

"Why are they turned out?" said he.

"Because they do not pay their rent; they owe for two terms."

"How much is that?"

"Twenty francs," said the old woman.

Marius had 30 francs in reserve in a drawer.

"Here," said he to the old woman, "there are 25 francs. Pay for these poor people; give them 5 francs, and do not tell them that it is from me."

VI

THE SUPPLANTER

IT happened that the regiment to which Lient. Théodule belonged came to be stationed at Paris. This was the occasion of a second idea occurring to Aunt Gillenormand. She had, the first time, thought she would have Marius watched by Théodule; she plotted to have Théodule supplant Marius.

At all events, and in case the grandfather should feel a vague need of a young face in the house—these rays of dawn are sometimes grateful to ruins—it was expedient to find another Marius. “Yes,” thought she, “it is merely an erratum such as I see in the books; for Marius read Théodule.”

A grandnephew is almost a grandson; for want of a lawyer a lancer will do.

One morning, as M. Gillenormand was reading something like “*La Quotidienne*,” his daughter entered, and said in her softest voice, for the matter concerned her favorite:

“Father, Théodule is coming this morning to present his respects to you.”

“Who is that—Théodule?”

“Your grandnephew.”

“Ah!” said the grandfather.

Then he resumed his reading, thought no more of the grandnephew, who was nothing more than any Théodule, and very soon was greatly excited, as was almost always the case when he read. The “sheet” which he had, royalist indeed—that was a matter of course—announced for the next day, without any mollification, one of the little daily occurrences of the Paris of that time; that the students of the schools of law and medicine would meet in the square of the Pantheon at noon—to deliberate. The question was one of the topics of the moment; the artillery of the national guard, and a conflict between the minister of war and “the citizen militia” on the subject of the cannon planted in the court of the Louvre. The students were to “deliberate” thereupon. It did not require much more to enrage M. Gillenormand.

He thought of Marius, who was a student, and who, probably, would go, like the others, “to deliberate at noon, in the square of the Pantheon.”

While he was dwelling upon this painful thought Lieut. Théodule entered in citizen’s dress, which was adroit, and was discreetly introduced by Mdlle. Gillenormand. The lancer reasoned thus: “The old Druid has not put everything into an annuity. It is well worth while to disguise one’s self in taffeta occasionally.”

Mdlle. Gillenormand said aloud to her father:

"Théodule, your grandnephew."

And, in a whisper, to the lieutenant:

"Say 'yes' to everything."

And she retired.

The lieutenant, little accustomed to such venerable encounters, stammered out with some timidity: "Good-morning, uncle," and made a mixed bow composed of the involuntary and mechanical awkwardness of the military salute, finished off with the bow of the bourgeois.

"Ah! it is you; very well, take a seat," said the old man.

And then he entirely forgot the lancer.

Théodule sat down, and M. Gillenormand got up.

M. Gillenormand began to walk up and down, with his hands in his pockets, talking aloud, and rubbing with his nervous old fingers the two watches which he carried in his two waistcoat pockets.

"This mess of snivelers! they meet together in the square of the Pantheon. Virtue of my queen! Scapegraces yesterday at nurse! If their noses were squeezed the milk would run out! And they deliberate at noon to-morrow! What are we coming to? What are we coming to? It is clear that we are going to the pit. That is where the descamisados have led us! The citizen artillery! To deliberate about the citizen artillery! To go out and jaw in the open air about the blowing of the national guard! And whom will they find themselves with there? Just see where Jacobinism leads to. I will bet anything you please—a million against a fig—that they will all be fugitives from justice and discharged convicts. Republicans and galley slaves—they fit like a nose and a handkerchief. Carnot said: 'Where would you have me go, traitor?' Fouché answered: 'Wherever you like, fool!' That is what republicans are."

"It is true," said Théodule.

M. Gillenormand turned his head half around, saw Théodule, and continued:

"Only think that this rogue has been so wicked as to turn carbonaro! Why did you leave my house? To go out and be a republican. Pish! in the first place the people do not want your republic, they do not want it, they have good sense; they know very well that there

always have been kings, and that there always will be; they know very well that the people, after all, is nothing but the people; they laugh at your republic, do you understand, idiot? Is not that caprice of yours horrible? To fall in love with Père Duchesne, to cast sheep's-eyes at the guillotine, to sing ditties and play the guitar under the balcony of '93; we must spit upon all these young folks, they are so stupid! They are all in a heap. Not one is out of it. It is enough to breathe the air that blows down the street to make them crazy. The nineteenth century is poison. The first blackguard you will meet wears his goat's beard, thinks he is very clever, and discards his old relatives. That is republican, that is romantic. What is that, indeed, romantic? Have the kindness to tell me what that is! Every possible folly. A year ago you went to 'Hernani.' I want to know, 'Hernani!' antitheses, abominations which are not written in French. And then they have cannon in the court of the Louvre. Such is the brigandage of these times."

"You are right, uncle," said Théodule.

M. Gillenormand resumed:

"Cannon in the court of the museum; what for? Cannon, what do you want? Do you want to shoot down the Apollo Belvidere? What have cartridges to do with the Venus de Medici? Oh! these young folks nowadays—all scamps! What a small affair is their Benjamin Constant! And those who are not scoundrels are boobies! They do all they can to be ugly, they are badly dressed, they are afraid of women, they appear like beggars about petticoats, which make the wenches burst out laughing; upon my word, you would say the poor fellows are ashamed of love. They are homely, and they finish themselves off by being stupid; they repeat the puns of Tiercelin and Potier, they have sackcoats, horse-jockeys' waistcoats, coarse cotton shirts, coarse cloth trousers, coarse leather boots, and their jabber is like their feathers. Their jargon would serve to sole their old shoes with. And all these foolish brats have political opinions. They ought to be strictly forbidden to have any political opinions. They fabricate systems, they reform society, they demolish monarchy, they upset all laws, they put the garret into the cellar, and my porter in place of the king; they turn Eu-

rope topsy-turvy; they rebuild the world, and the favors they get are sly peeps at washerwomen's legs when they are getting into their carts! Oh! Marius! Oh! you beggar! going to bawl in a public place; to discuss, to debate, to take measures! they call them measures, just gods! disorder shrinks and becomes a ninny. I have seen chaos—I see a jumble. Scholars deliberating about the national guard; you would not see that among the Ojibways or among the Cadodaches! The savages who go naked, their pates looking like shuttlecocks, with clubs in their paws, are not so wild as these bachelors. Fourpenny monkeys! they pass for learned and capable! they deliberate and reason! it is the world's end. It is evidently the end of this miserable terraqueous globe. It needed some final hic-cough; France is giving it. Deliberate, you rogues! Such things will happen as long as they go and read the papers under the arches of the Odeon. That costs them a sou and their good sense and their intelligence and their heart and their soul and their mind. They come away from there and they bring the scamp into their family. All these journals are a pest; all, even the 'Drapeau Blanc!' at bottom Martainville was a Jacobin. Oh, just heavens! you can be proud of having thrown your grandfather into despair, you can!"

"That is evident," said Théodule.

And taking advantage of M. Gillenormand's drawing breath, the lancer added, magisterially: "There ought to be no journal but the 'Moniteur,' and no book but the 'Annuaire Militaire.'"

M. Gillenormand went on:

"He is like their Sieyès! a regicide ending off as a senator; that is always the way they end. They slash themselves with thee-and-thouing and citizen, so that they may come to be called M. l'Count; M. l'Count as big as my arm—the butchers of September. The philosopher Sieyès! I am happy to say that I never made any more account of the philosophies of all these philosophers than of the spectacles of the clown of Tivoli. I saw the senators one day passing along the Quai Malaquais in mantles of violet velvet sprinkled with bees and hats in the style of Henry IV. They were hideous. You would have said they were the monkeys of the tiger's court. Citizens, I tell you that

your progress is a lunacy, that your humanity is a dream, that your revolution is a crime, that your republic is a monster, that your young maiden, France, comes from the brothel, and I maintain it before you all, whoever you are, be you publicists, be you economists, be you legists, be you greater connoisseurs in liberty, equality, and fraternity than the axe of the guillotine. I tell you that, my good men!"

"Zounds!" cried the lieutenant, "that is wonderfully true."

M. Gillenormand broke off a gesture which he had begun, turned, looked the lancer Théodule steadily in the eyes, and said:

"You are a fool!"

BOOK SIXTH—THE CONJUNCTION OF TWO STARS

I

THE NICKNAME MODE OF FORMATION OF FAMILY NAMES

MARIUS was now a fine-looking young man, of medium height, with heavy jet-black hair, a high, intelligent brow, large and passionate nostrils, a frank and calm expression, and an indescribable something beaming from every feature, which was at once lofty, thoughtful, and innocent. His profile, all the lines of which were rounded, but without loss of strength, possessed that Germanic gentleness which has made its way into French physiognomy through Alsace and Lorraine, and that entire absence of angles which rendered the Sicambri so recognizable among the Romans and which distinguishes the leonine from the aquiline race. He was at that season of life at which the mind of men who think is made up in nearly equal proportions of depth and simplicity. In a difficult situation he possessed all the essentials of stupidity; another turn of the screw and he could become sublime. His manners were reserved, cold, polished, far from free. But, as his mouth was very pleasant, his lips the reddest and his teeth the whitest in the world, his smile corrected

the severity of his physiognomy. At certain moments there was a strange contrast between this chaste brow and this voluptuous smile. His eye was small, his look great.

At the time of his most wretched poverty he noticed that girls turned when he passed, and, with a deathly feeling in his heart, he fled or hid himself. He thought they looked at him on account of his old clothes and that they were laughing at him; the truth is, that they looked at him because of his graceful appearance, and that they dreamed over it.

This wordless misunderstanding between him and the pretty girls he met had rendered him hostile to society. He attached himself to none, for the excellent reason that he fled before all. Thus, he lived without aim—like a beast, said Courfeyrac.

Courfeyrac said to him also: "Aspire not to be a sage (they used familiar speech—familiarity of speech is characteristic of youthful friendships). My dear boy, a piece of advice. Read not so much in books and look a little more upon the Peggys. The little rogues are good for thee, oh Marius! By continual flight and blushing thou shalt become a brute."

At other times Courfeyrac met him with: "Good-day, M. l'Abbé."

When Courfeyrac said anything of this kind to him, for the next week Marius avoided women—old, as well as young—more than ever and especially did he avoid the haunts of Courfeyrac.

There were, however, in all the immensity of creation, two women from whom Marius never fled and whom he did not at all avoid. Indeed, he would have been very much astonished had anybody told him that they were women. One was the old woman with the beard, who swept his room and who gave Courfeyrac an opportunity to say: "As his servant wears her beard, Marius does not wear his." The other was a little girl that he saw very often and that he never looked at.

For more than a year Marius had noticed in a retired walk of the Luxembourg, the walk which borders the parapet of the Pépinière, a man and a girl quite young, nearly always sitting side by side, on the same seat, at the most retired end of the walk, near the Rue de l'Ouest.

Whenever that chance which controls the promenades of men whose eye is turned within led Marius to this walk—and it was almost every day—he found this couple there. The man might be sixty years old; he seemed sad and serious; his whole person presented the robust but wearied appearance of a soldier retired from active service. Had he worn a decoration Marius would have said: “It is an old officer.” His expression was kind, but it did not invite approach and he never returned a look. He wore a blue coat and pantaloons and a broad-brimmed hat, which always appeared to be new; a black cravat and quaker linen, that is to say, brilliantly white, but of coarse texture. A grisette, passing near him one day, said: “There is a very nice widower.” His hair was perfectly white.

The first time the young girl that accompanied him sat down on the seat which they seemed to have adopted she looked like a girl of about thirteen or fourteen, puny to the extent of being almost ugly, awkward, insignificant, yet promising, perhaps, to have rather fine eyes. But they were always looking about with a disagreeable assurance. She wore the dress, at once aged and childish, peculiar to the convent schoolgirl—an ill-fitting garment of coarse black merino. They appeared to be father and daughter.

For two or three days Marius scrutinized this old man, who was not yet an aged man, and this little girl, not yet a woman; then he paid no more attention to them. For their part they did not even seem to see him. They talked with each other peacefully and with indifference to all else. The girl chatted incessantly and gayly. The old man spoke little and at times looked upon her with an unutterable expression of fatherliness.

Marius had acquired a sort of mechanical habit of promenading on this walk. He always found them there.

It was usually thus:

Marius would generally reach the walk at the end opposite their seat, promenade the whole length of it, passing before them, then return to the end by which he entered, and so on. He performed this turn five or six times in his promenade and this promenade five or six times a week, but they and he had never come to exchange bows. This man and this young girl, though they appeared, and perhaps because they appeared, to avoid observation, had

naturally excited the attention of the five or six students, who, from time to time, took their promenades along the Pépinière; the studious after their lecture, the others after their game of billiards. Courfeyrac, who belonged to the latter, had noticed them at some time or other, but, finding the girl homely, had very quickly and carefully avoided them. He had fled like a Parthian, launching a nickname behind him. Struck, especially, by the dress of the little girl and the hair of the old man, he had named the daughter "Mdlle. Lanoire" (black) and the father "M. Leblanc" (white); and so, as nobody knew them otherwise, in the absence of a name, this surname had become fixed. The students said: "Ah! M. Leblanc is at his seat!" and Marius, like the rest, had found it convenient to call this unknown gentleman M. Leblanc.

We shall do as they did and say M. Leblanc for the convenience of this story.

Marius saw them thus nearly every day at the same hour during the first year. He found the man very much to his liking, but the girl rather disagreeable.

II

LUX FACTA EST

THE second year, at the precise point of this history to which the reader has arrived, it so happened that Marius broke off this habit of going to the Luxembourg, without really knowing why himself, and there were nearly six months during which he did not set foot in his walk. At last he went back there again one day; it was a serene summer morning; Marius was as happy as one always is when the weather is fine. It seemed to him as if he had in his heart all the bird songs which he heard and all the bits of blue sky which he saw through the trees.

He went straight to "his walk," and as soon as he reached it he saw, still on the same seat, this well-known pair. When he came near them, however, he saw that it was indeed the same man, but it seemed to him that it was no longer the same girl. The woman whom he now saw was a noble creature, with all the most bewitching outlines of woman, at the precise moment at which they are combined with all the most charming graces of childhood, that

pure and fleeting moment which can only be translated by these two words—sweet fifteen. Beautiful chestnut hair, shaded with veins of gold; a brow which seemed chiseled marble, cheeks which seemed made of roses, a pale incarnadine, a flushed whiteness; an exquisite mouth, whence came a smile like a gleam of sunshine and a voice like music; a head which Raphael would have given to Mary, on a neck which Jean Goujon would have given to Venus. And, that nothing might be wanting to this ravishing form, the nose was not beautiful, it was pretty; neither straight nor curved, neither Italian nor Greek; it was the Parisian nose—that is, something sprightly, fine, irregular and pure—the despair of painters and the charm of poets.

When Marius passed near her he could not see her eyes, which were always cast down. He saw only her long chestnut lashes, eloquent of mystery and modesty.

But that did not prevent the beautiful girl from smiling as she listened to the white-haired man who was speaking to her, and nothing was so transporting as this maidenly smile with these downcast eyes.

At the first instant Marius thought it was another daughter of the same man, a sister, doubtless, of her whom he had seen before. But when the invariable habit of this promenade led him for the second time near the seat, and he had looked at her attentively, he recognized that she was the same. In six months the little girl had become a young woman—that was all. Nothing is more frequent than this phenomenon. There is a moment when girls bloom out in a twinkling and become roses all at once. Yesterday we left them children—to-day we find them dangerous.

She had not only grown, she had become idealized. As three April days are enough for certain trees to put on a covering of flowers, so six months had been enough for her to put on a mantle of beauty.

We sometimes see people poor and mean, who seem to awaken, pass suddenly from indigence to luxury, incur expenses of all sorts, and become all at once splendid, prodigal, and magnificent. That comes from interest received; yesterday was pay-day. The young girl had received her dividend.

And then she was no longer the schoolgirl with her plush hat, her merino dress, her shapeless shoes, and her red hands; taste had come to her with beauty. She was a woman well dressed, with a sort of simple and rich elegance without any particular style. She wore a dress of black damask, a mantle of the same, and a white crape hat. Her white gloves showed the delicacy of her hand, which played with the Chinese ivory handle of her parasol, and her silk boot betrayed the smallness of her foot. When you passed her her whole toilet exhaled the penetrating fragrance of youth.

As to the man, he was still the same.

The second time that Marius came near her the young girl raised her eyes; they were of a deep celestial blue, but in this veiled azure was nothing yet beyond the look of a child. She looked at Marius with indifference, as she would have looked at any little monkey playing under the sycamores, or the marble vase which cast its shadow over the bench; and Marius also continued his promenade, thinking of something else.

He passed four or five times more by the seat where the young girl was without even turning his eyes toward her.

On the following days he came as usual to the Luxembourg, as usual he found the "father and daughter" there, but he paid no attention to them. He thought no more of this girl now that she was handsome than he had thought of her when she was homely. He passed very near the bench on which she sat, because that was his habit.

III

EFFECT OF SPRING

ONE day the air was mild, the Luxembourg was flooded with sunshine and shadow; the sky was as clear as if the angels had washed it in the morning; the sparrows were twittering in the depths of the chestnut trees; Marius had opened his whole soul to nature; he was thinking of nothing, he was living and breathing; he passed near this seat; the young girl raised her eyes; their glances met.

But what was there now in the glance of the young girl?

Marius could not have told. There was nothing and there was everything. It was a strange flash.

She cast down her eyes and he continued on his way.

What he had seen was not the simple, artless eye of a child; it was a mysterious abyss, half-opened, then suddenly closed.

There is a time when every young girl looks thus. Woe to him upon whom she looks!

This first glance of a soul which does not yet know itself is like the dawn in the sky. It is the awakening of something radiant and unknown. Nothing can express the dangerous chasm of this unlooked-for gleam which suddenly suffuses adorable mysteries, and which is made up of all the innocence of the present and of all the passion of the future. It is a kind of irresolute lovingness which is revealed by chance, and which is waiting. It is a snare which innocence unconsciously spreads and in which she catches hearts without intending it and without knowing it. It is a maiden glancing like a woman.

It is rare that deep reverie is not born of this glance wherever it may fall. All that is pure and all that is vestal is concentrated in the celestial and mortal glance, which more than the most studied ogling of the coquette has the magic power of suddenly forcing into bloom in the depths of a heart this flower of the shade full of perfumes and poisons which is called love.

At night, on retiring to his garret, Marius cast a look upon his dress, and for the first time perceived that he had the slovenliness, the indecency and the unheard-of stupidity to promenade in the Luxembourg with his "every-day" suit, a hat broken near the band, coarse teamsters' boots, black pantaloons shiny at the knees, and a black coat threadbare at the elbows.

IV

COMMENCEMENT OF A GREAT DISTEMPER

THE next day at the usual hour Marius took from his closet his new coat, his new pantaloons, his new hat, and his new boots; he dressed himself in this panoply complete, put on his gloves, prodigious prodigality, and went to the Luxembourg.

On the way he met Courfeyrac and pretended not to see him. Courfeyrac, on his return home, said to his friends:

"I have just met Marius' new hat and coat with Marius inside. Probably he was going to an examination. He looked stupid enough."

On reaching the Luxembourg Marius took a turn round the fountain and looked at the swans; there he remained for a long time in contemplation before a statue, the head of which was black with moss and which was minus a hip. Near the fountain was a big-bellied bourgeois of 40, holding a little boy of 5 by the hand, to whom he was saying: "Beware of extremes, my son. Keep thyself equally distant from despotism and from anarchy." Marius listened to this good bourgeois. Then he took another turn around the fountain. Finally, he went toward "his walk," slowly and as if with regret. One would have said that he was at once compelled to go and prevented from going. He was unconscious of all this and thought he was doing as he did every day.

When he entered the walk he saw M. Leblanc and the young girl at the other end "on their seat." He buttoned his coat, stretched it down that there might be no wrinkles, noticed with some complaisance the lustre of his pantaloons, and marched upon the seat. There was something of attack in this march, and certainly a desire of conquest. I say, then, he marched upon the seat, as I would say: Hannibal marched upon Rome.

Beyond this there was nothing which was not mechanical in all his movements, and he had in nowise interrupted the customary preoccupations of his mind and his labor. He was thinking at that moment that the "*Manuel du Baccalauréat*" was a stupid book, and that it must have been compiled by rare old fools, to give an analysis, as of masterpieces of the human mind, of three tragedies of Racine and only one of Molière's comedies. He had a sharp, singing sound in his ear. While approaching the seat he was smoothing the wrinkles out of his coat and his eyes were fixed on the young girl. It seemed to him as though she filled the whole extremity of the walk with a pale, bluish light.

As he drew nearer his step became slower and slower.

At some distance from the seat, long before he had reached the end of the walk, he stopped, and he did not himself know how it happened, but he turned back. He did not even say to himself that he would not go to the end. It was doubtful if the young girl could see him so far off and notice his fine appearance in his new suit. However, he held himself very straight so that he might look well in case anybody who was behind should happen to notice him.

He reached the opposite end and then returned, and this time he approached a little nearer to the seat. He even came to within about three trees of it, but there he felt an indescribable lack of power to go further and he hesitated. He thought he had seen the young girl's face bent toward him. Still he made a great and manly effort, conquered his hesitation, and continued his advance. In a few seconds he was passing before the seat, erect and firm, blushing to his ears, without daring to cast a look to the right or the left and with his hand in his coat like a statesman. At the moment he passed under the guns of the fortress he felt a frightful palpitation of the heart. She wore, as on the previous day, her damask dress and her crape hat. He heard the sound of an ineffable voice, which might be "her voice." She was talking quietly. She was very pretty. He felt it, though he made no effort to see her. "She could not, however," thought he, "but have some esteem and consideration for me if she knew that I was the real author of the dissertation on Marcos Obregon de la Ronda, which M. François de Neufchâteau has put as his own at the beginning of his edition of 'Gil Blas!'"

He passed the seat, went to the end of the walk, which was quite near, then turned and passed again before the beautiful girl. This time he was very pale. Indeed, he was experiencing nothing that was not very disagreeable. He walked away from the seat and from the young girl, and although his back was turned he imagined that she was looking at him, and that made him stumble.

He made no effort to approach the seat again, he stopped midway of the walk and sat down there—a thing which he never did—casting many side glances and thinking in the most indistinct depths of his mind that after all it must be difficult for persons whose white hat and black

dress he admired to be absolutely insensible to his glossy pantaloons and his new coat.

At the end of a quarter of an hour he rose as if to commence his walk toward this seat, which was encircled by a halo. He, however, stood silent and motionless. For the first time in fifteen months he said to himself that this gentleman who sat there every day with his daughter had undoubtedly noticed him and probably thought his assiduity very strange.

For the first time also he felt a certain irreverence in designating this unknown man, even in the silence of his thought, by the nickname of M. Leblanc.

He remained thus for some minutes with his head down tracing designs on the ground with a little stick which he had in his hand.

Then he turned abruptly away from the seat, away from M. Leblanc and his daughter, and went home.

That day he forgot to go to dinner. At eight o'clock in the evening he discovered it, and as it was too late to go down to the Rue St. Jacques, "No matter," he said, and he ate a piece of bread.

He did not retire until he had carefully brushed and folded his coat.

V

SUNDRY THUNDERBOLTS FALL UPON MA'AM BOUGON

NEXT day Ma'am Bougon—thus Courfeyrac designated the old portress-landlady of the Gorbeau tenement—Ma'am Bougon—her name was in reality Mine. Bourgon, as we have stated, but this terrible fellow Courfeyrac respected nothing—Ma'am Bougon was stupefied with astonishment to see M. Marius go out again with his new coat.

He went again to the Luxembourg, but did not get beyond his seat midway of the walk. He sat down there as on the day previous, gazing from a distance and seeing distinctly the white hat, the black dress, and especially the bluish light. He did not stir from the seat and did not go home until the gates of the Luxembourg were shut. He did not see M. Leblanc and his daughter retire. He concluded from that that they left the garden by the gate on

the Rue de l'Ouest. Later, some weeks afterward, when he thought of it, he could not remember where he had dined that night.

The next day, for the third time, Ma'am Bougon was thunderstruck. Marius went out with his new suit. "Three days running!" she exclaimed.

She made an attempt to follow him, but Marius walked briskly and with immense strides; it was a hippopotamus undertaking to catch a chamois. In two minutes she lost sight of him and came back out of breath, three-quarters choked by her asthma and furious. "The silly fellow," she muttered, "to put on his handsome clothes every day and make people run like that!"

Marius had gone to the Luxembourg.

The young girl was there with M. Leblanc. Marius approached as near as he could, seeming to be reading a book, but he was still very far off; then he returned and sat down on his seat, where he spent four hours watching the artless little sparrows as they hopped along the walk; they seemed to him to be mocking him.

Thus a fortnight rolled away. Marius went to the Luxembourg no longer to promenade, but to sit down, always in the same place and without knowing why. Once there he did not stir. Every morning he put on his new suit, not to be conspicuous, and he began again the next morning.

She was indeed of a marvelous beauty. The only remark which could be made that would resemble a criticism is that the contradiction between her look, which was sad, and her smile, which was joyous, gave to her countenance something a little wild which produced this effect, that at certain moments this sweet face became strange without ceasing to be charming.

VI

TAKEN PRISONER

ON one of the last days of the second week, Marius was as usual sitting on his seat, holding in his hand an open book of which he had not turned a leaf for two hours. Suddenly he trembled. A great event was commencing

at the end of the walk. M. Leblanc and his daughter had left their seat, the daughter had taken the arm of the father, and they were coming slowly toward the middle of the walk where Marius was. Marius closed his book, then he opened it, then he made an attempt to read. He trembled. The halo was coming straight toward him. "Oh, dear!" thought he, "I shall not have time to take an attitude." However, the man with the white hair and the young girl were advancing. It seemed to him that it would last a century, and that it was only a second. "What are they coming by here for?" he asked himself. "What! is she going to pass this place? Are her feet to press this ground in this walk, but a step from me?" He was overwhelmed, he would gladly have been very handsome, he would gladly have worn the cross of the Legion of Honor. He heard the gentle and measured sound of their steps approaching. He imagined that M. Leblanc was hurling angry looks upon him. "Is he going to speak to me?" thought he. He bowed his head; when he raised it they were quite near him. The young girl passed, and in passing she looked at him. She looked at him steadily, with a sweet and thoughtful look, which made Marius tremble from head to foot. It seemed to him that she reproached him for having been so long without coming to her, and that she said: "It is I who come." Marius was bewildered by those eyes full of flashing light and fathomless abysses.

He felt as though his brain were on fire. She had come to him, what happiness! And then, how she had looked at him! She seemed more beautiful than she had ever seemed before. Beautiful with a beauty which combined all of the woman with all of the angel, a beauty which would have made Petrarch sing, and Dante kneel. He felt as though he was swimming in the deep blue sky. At the same time he was horribly disconcerted, because he had a little dust on his boots.

He felt sure that she had seen his boots in this condition.

He followed her with his eyes till she disappeared, then he began to walk in the Luxembourg like a madman. It is probable that at times he laughed, alone as he was, and spoke aloud. He was so strange and dreamy when near the children's nurses that every one thought he was in love with them.

He went out of the Luxembourg to find her again in some street.

He met Courfeyrac under the arches of the Odeon, and said:

"Come and dine with me." They went to Rousseau's and spent six francs. Marius ate like an ogre. He gave six sous to the waiter. At desert he said to Courfeyrac: "Have you read the paper? What a fine speech Audry de Puyraveau has made!"

He was desperately in love.

After dinner he said to Courfeyrac. "Come to the theatre with me." They went to the Porte St. Martin to see Frederic in "L'Auberge des Adrets." Marius was hugely amused.

At the same time he became still more strange and incomprehensible. On leaving the theatre he refused to look at the garter of a little milliner who was crossing a gutter, and when Courfeyrac said, "I would not object to putting that woman in my collection," it almost horrified him.

Courfeyrac invited him to breakfast next morning at the Café Voltaire. Marius went and ate still more than the day before. He was very thoughtful, and yet very gay. One would have said that he seized upon all possible occasions to burst out laughing. To every country-fellow who was introduced to him he gave a tender embrace. A circle of students gathered round the table, and there was talk of the flummery paid for by the government, which was retailed at the Sorbonne; then the conversation fell upon the faults and gaps in the dictionaries and prosodies of Quicherat. Marius interrupted the discussion by exclaiming: "However, it is a very pleasant thing to have the cross."

"He is a comical fellow!" said Courfeyrac, aside to Jean Prouvaire.

"No," replied Jean Prouvaire, "he is serious."

He was serious, indeed; Marius was in this first vehement and fascinating period in which the grand passion commences.

One glance had done all that.

When the mine is loaded, and the match is ready, nothing is simpler. A glance is a spark.

It was all over with him. Marius loved a woman. His destiny was entering upon the unknown.

The glances of women are like certain apparently peaceful, but really formidable, machines. You pass them every day, quietly, with impunity, and without suspicion of danger. There comes a moment when you forget even that they are there. You come and go, you muse and talk and laugh. Suddenly you feel that you are seized! It is done. The wheels have caught you, the glance has captured you. It has taken you, no matter how or where, by any portion whatever of your thought which was trailing through any absence of mind. You are lost. You will be drawn in entirely. A train of mysterious forces has gained possession of you. You struggle in vain. No human succor is possible. You will be drawn down from wheel to wheel, from anguish to anguish, from torture to torture. You, your mind, your fortune, your future, your soul; and you will not escape from the terrible machine, until, according as you are in the power of a malevolent nature, or a noble heart, you shall be disfigured by shame or transfigured by love.

VII

ADVENTURES OF THE LETTER U ABANDONED TO CONJECTURE

ISOLATION, separation from all things, pride, independence, a taste for nature, lack of every-day material activity, life in one's self, the secret struggles of chastity, and an ecstasy of good-will toward the whole creation had prepared Marius for this possession which is called love. His worship for his father had become almost a religion, and, like all religion, had retired into the depths of his heart. He needed something above that. Love came.

A whole month passed, during which Marius went every day to the Luxembourg. When the hour came nothing could keep him away. "He is out at service," said Courfeyrac. Marius lived in transports. It is certain that the young girl looked at him.

He finally grew bolder, and approached nearer to the seat. However, he passed before it no more, obeying at

once the instinct of timidity and the instinct of prudence peculiar to lovers. He thought it better not to attract the "attention of the father." He formed his combinations of stations behind trees and the pedestals of statues, with consummate art, so as to be seen as much as possible by the young girl and as little as possible by the old gentleman. Sometimes he would stand for half an hour motionless behind some Leonidas or Spartacus with a book in his hand, over which his eyes, timidly raised, were looking for the young girl, while she, for her part, was turning her charming profile toward him, suffused with a smile. While yet talking in the most natural and quiet way in the world, with the white-haired man, she rested upon Marius all the dreams of a maidenly and passionate eye. Ancient and immemorial art which Eve knew from the first day of the world, and which every woman knows from the first day of her life! Her tongue replied to one and her eyes to the other.

We must, however, suppose that M. Leblanc perceived something of this at last, for often when Marius came he would rise and begin to promenade. He had left their accustomed place, and had taken the seat at the other end of the walk, near the gladiator, as if to see whether Marius would follow them. Marius did not understand it, and committed that blunder. "The father" began to be less punctual and did not bring "his daughter" every day. Sometimes he came alone. Then Marius did not stay. Another blunder.

Marius took no note of these symptoms. From the phase of timidity he had passed, a natural and inevitable progress, to the phase of blindness. His love grew. He dreamed of her every night. And then there came to him a good fortune for which he had not even hoped, oil upon the fire, double darkness upon his eyes. One night, at dusk, he found on the seat which M. Leblanc and his daughter had just left a handkerchief, a plain handkerchief, without embroidery, but white, fine, and which appeared to him to exhale ineffable odors. He seized it in transport. This handkerchief was marked with the letters "U. F." Marius knew nothing of this beautiful girl, neither her family nor her name nor her dwelling; these two letters were the first thing he had caught of her,

adorable initials upon which he began straightway to build his castle. It was evidently her first name. Ursula, thought he—what a sweet name! He kissed the handkerchief, inhaled its perfume, put it over his heart, on his flesh in the daytime, and at night went to sleep with it on his lips.

“I feel her whole soul in it!” he exclaimed.

This handkerchief belonged to the old gentleman, who had simply let it fall from his pocket.

For days and days after this piece of good fortune, he always appeared at the Luxembourg kissing this handkerchief and placing it on his heart. The beautiful child did not understand this at all, and indicated it to him by signs, which he did not perceive.

“Oh, modesty!” said Marius.

VIII

EVEN THE INVALIDES MAY BE LUCKY

SINCE we have pronounced the word modesty, and since we conceal nothing, we must say that once, however, through all his ecstasy, “his Ursula” gave him a very serious pang. It was upon one of the days when she prevailed upon M. Leblanc to leave the seat and to promenade on the walk. A brisk north wind was blowing, which swayed the tops of the plane trees. Father and daughter, arm in arm, had just passed before Marius’ seat. Marius had risen behind them and was following them with his eyes, as it was natural that he should in this desperate situation of his heart.

Suddenly a gust of wind, rather more lively than the rest, and probably intrusted with the little affairs of spring, flew down from La Pepinière, rushed upon the walk, enveloped the young girl in a transporting tremor, worthy of the nymphs of Virgil and the fauns of Theocritus, and raised her skirt, this skirt more sacred than that of Isis, almost to the height of the garter. A limb of exquisite mold was seen. Marius saw it. He was exasperated and furious.

The young girl had put down her dress with a divinely startled movement, but he was outraged none the less.

True, he was alone in the walk. But there might have been somebody there. And if anybody had been there! could one conceive of such a thing? What she had done was horrible! Alas, the poor child had done nothing; there was but one culprit, the wind; and yet Marius, in whom all the Bartholo which there is in Cheribun was confusedly trembling, was determined to be dissatisfied, and was jealous of his shadow. For it is thus that is awakened in the human heart and imposed upon man, even unjustly, the bitter and strange jealousy of the flesh. Besides, and throwing this jealousy out of consideration, there was nothing that was agreeable to him in the sight of that beautiful limb; the white stocking of the first woman that came along would have given him more pleasure.

When "his Ursula," reaching the end of the walk, returned with M. Leblanc, and passed before the seat on which Marius had again sat down, Marius threw at her a cross and cruel look. The young girl slightly straightened back, with the elevation of the eyelids which says: "Well, what is the matter with him?"

That was "their first quarrel."

Marius had hardly finished this scene with her when somebody came down the walk. It was an *Invalide* very much bent, wrinkled and pale with age, in the uniform of Louis XV, with the little oval patch of red cloth with crossed swords on his back, the soldier's Cross of St. Louis, and decorated also by a coat sleeve in which there was no arm, a silver chin and a wooden leg. Marius thought he could discern that this man appeared to be very much pleased. It seemed to him even that the old cynic, as he hobbled along by him, had addressed to him a very fraternal and very merry wink, as if by some chance they had been put into communication and had enjoyed some dainty bit of good fortune together. What had he seen to be so pleased, this relic of Mars? What had happened between this leg of wood and the other? Marius had a paroxysm of jealousy. "Perhaps he was by!" said he; "perhaps he saw!" And he would have been glad to exterminate the *Invalide*.

Time lending his aid, every point is blunted. This anger of Marius against "Ursula," however just and proper it might be, passed away. He forgave her at

last; but it was a great effort; he pouted at her three days.

Meanwhile, in spite of all that and because of all that, his passion was growing and was growing mad.

IX

AN ECLIPSE

WE have seen how Marius discovered, or thought he discovered, that her name was Ursula.

Hunger comes with love. To know that her name was Ursula had been much; it was little. In three or four weeks Marius had devoured this piece of good fortune. He desired another. He wished to know where she lived.

He had committed one blunder in falling into the snare of the seat by the gladiator. He had committed a second by not remaining at the Luxembourg when M. Leblanc came there alone. He committed a third, a monstrous one. He followed "Ursula."

She lived in the Rue de l'Ouest, in the least frequented part of it, in a new three-story house of modest appearance.

From that moment Marius added to his happiness in seeing her at the Luxembourg the happiness of following her home.

His hunger increased. He knew her name, her first name, at least, the charming name, the real name of a woman; he knew where she lived; he desired to know who she was.

One night after he had followed them home and seen them disappear at the *porte-cochère*, he entered after them and said boldly to the porter:

"Is it the gentleman on the first floor who has just come in?"

"No," answered the porter. "It is the gentleman on the third."

Another fact. This success made Marius still bolder.

"In front?" he asked.

"Faith!" said the porter, "the house is only built on the street."

"And what is this gentleman?"

"He lives on his income, monsieur. A very kind man, who does a great deal of good among the poor, though not rich."

"What is his name?" continued Marius.

The porter raised his head and said:

"Is monsieur a detective?"

Marius retired, much abashed, but still in great transports. He was getting on.

"Good," thought he. "I know that her name is Ursula, that she is the daughter of a retired gentleman, and that she lives there, in the third story, in the Rue de l'Ouest."

Next day M. Leblanc and his daughter made but a short visit to the Luxembourg; they went away while it was yet broad daylight. Marius followed them into the Rue de l'Ouest, as was his custom. On reaching the *porte-cochère* M. Leblanc passed his daughter in and then stopped, and before entering himself turned and looked steadily at Marius. The day after that they did not come to the Luxembourg. Marius waited in vain all day.

At nightfall he went to the Rue de l'Ouest and saw a light in the window of the third story. He walked beneath these windows until the light was put out.

The next day nobody at the Luxembourg. Marius waited all day, and then went to perform his night duty under the windows. That took him till 10 o'clock in the evening. His dinner took care of itself. Fever supports the sick man and love the lover.

He passed a week in this way. M. Leblanc and his daughter appeared at the Luxembourg no more. Marius made melancholy conjectures; he dared not watch the *porte-cochère* during the day. He limited himself to night to gaze upon the reddish light of the windows. At times he saw shadows moving and his heart beat high.

On the eighth day when he reached the house there was no light in the windows. "What!" said he, "the lamp is not yet lighted. But yet it is dark. Or they have gone out?" He waited till 10 o'clock. Till midnight. Till 1 o'clock in the morning. No light appeared in the third-story windows and nobody entered the house. He went away very gloomy.

On the morrow—for he lived only from morrow to morrow; there was no longer any to-day, so to speak, to him—

on the morrow he found nobody at the Luxembourg, he waited; at dusk he went to the house. No light in the windows; the blinds were closed; the third story was entirely dark.

Marius knocked at the *porte-cochère*; went in and said to the porter:

"The gentleman of the third floor?"

"Moved," said the porter.

Marius tottered and said, feebly:

"Since when?"

"Yesterday."

"Where does he live now?"

"I don't know anything about it."

"He has not left his new address, then?"

"No."

And the porter, looking up, recognized Marius.

"What! it is you!" said he; but decidedly now, "You do keep a bright lookout."

BOOK SEVENTH—PATRON MINETTE

I

THE MINES AND THE MINERS

EVERY human society has what is called in the theatres a third sub-stage. The social soil is mined everywhere, sometimes for good, sometimes for evil. These works are in strata; there are upper mines and lower mines. There is a top and a bottom in this dark sub-soil which sometimes sinks beneath civilization and which our indifference and our carelessness trample under foot. The encyclopedia, in the last century, was a mine almost on the surface. The dark caverns, these gloomy protectors of primitive Christianity, were awaiting only an opportunity to explode beneath the Cæsars and to flood the human race with light. For in these sacred shades there is latent light. Volcanoes are full of a blackness capable of flashing flames. All lava begins as midnight. The catacombs, where the first Mass was said, were not merely the cave of Rome; they were the cavern of the world.

There is under the social structure this complex wonder

of a mighty burrow—of excavations of every kind. There is the religious mine, the philosophic mine, the political mine, the economic mine, the revolutionary mine. This pick with an idea, that pick with a figure, the other pick with a vengeance. They call and they answer from one catacomb to another. Utopias travel underground in the passages. They branch out in every direction. They sometimes meet there and fraternize. Jean Jacques lends his pick to Diogenes, who lends him his lantern. Sometimes they fight. Calvin takes Socinius by the hair. But nothing checks or interrupts the tension of all these energies toward their object. The vast simultaneous activity, which goes to and fro and up and down and up again, in these dusky regions, and which slowly transforms the upper through the lower and the outer through the inner; vast unknown swarming of workers. Society has hardly a suspicion of this work of undermining which, without touching its surface, changes its substance. So many subterranean degrees, so many differing labors, so many varying excavations. What comes from all this deep delving? The future.

The deeper we sink the more mysterious are the workers. To a degree which social philosophy can recognize, the work is good; beyond this degree it is doubtful and mixed; below, it becomes terrible. At a certain depth the excavations become impenetrable to the soul of civilization; the respirable limit of man is passed; the existence of monsters becomes possible.

The descending ladder is a strange one; each of its rounds corresponds to a step whereupon philosophy can set foot and where we discover some one of her workers, sometimes divine, sometimes monstrous. Below John Huss is Luther; below Luther is Descartes; below Descartes is Voltaire; below Voltaire is Condorcet; below Condorcet is Robespierre; below Robespierre is Marat; below Marat is Babeuf. And that continues. Lower still, in dusky confusion, at the limit which separates the indistinct from the invisible, glimpses are caught of other men in the gloom, who perhaps no longer exist. Those of yesterday are spectres; those of to-morrow are goblins. The embryonary work of the future is one of the visions of the philosopher.

A fetus world in limbo, what a wonderful profile!

St. Simon, Owen, Fourier, are there also in lateral galleries.

Indeed, although an invisible divine chain links together all these subterranean pioneers, who almost always believe they are alone, yet are not, their labors are very diverse, and the glow of some is in contrast with the flame of others. Some are paradisaic, others are tragic. Nevertheless, be the contrast what it may, all these workers, from the highest to the darkest, from the wisest to the silliest, have one thing in common, and that is disinterestedness. Marat, like Jesus, forgets himself. They throw self aside; they omit self; they do not think of self. They see something other than themselves. They have a light in their eyes and this light is searching for the absolute. The highest has all heaven in his eyes; the lowest, enigmatical as he may be, has yet beneath his brows the pale glow of the infinite. Venerate him, whatever he may do, who has this sign: the star-eye.

The shadow-eye is the other sign.

With it evil commences. Before him whose eye has no light, reflect and tremble. Social order has its black miners.

There is a point where undermining becomes burial and where light is extinguished.

Below all these mines which we have pointed out, below all these galleries, below all this immense underground venous system of progress and of Utopia, far deeper in the earth, lower than Marat, lower than Babeuf, lower, much lower, and without any connection with the upper galleries, is the last sap. A fear-inspiring place. This is what we have called the third sub-stage. It is the grave of the depths. It is the cave of the blind. *Inferi*.

This communicates with the gulfs.

II

THE LOWEST DEPTH

THERE disinterestedness vanishes. The demon is dimly rough-hewn; every one for himself. The eyeless I howls, searches, gropes, and gnaws. The social Ugolino is in this gulf.

The savage outlines which prowl over this grave, half brute, half phantom, have no thought for universal progress; they ignore ideas and words; they have no care but for individual glut. They are almost unconscious, and there is in them a horrible defacement. They have two mothers, both step-mothers, ignorance and misery. They have one guide, want; and their only form of satisfaction is appetite. They are voracious as beasts; that is to say, ferocious, not like the tyrant, but like the tiger. From suffering these goblins pass to crime; fated filiation, giddy procreation, the logic of darkness. What crawls in the third sub-stage is no longer the stifled demand for the absolute, it is the protest of matter. Man there becomes dragon. Hunger and thirst are the point of departure; Satan is the point of arrival. From this cave comes Laccenaire.

We have just seen, in the fourth book, one of the compartments of the upper mine, the great political, revolutionary, and philosophic sap. There, as we have said, all is noble, pure, worthy, and honorable. There, it is true, men may be deceived and are deceived, but their error is venerable, so much heroism does it imply. For the sum of all the work which is done there, there is one name: Progress.

The time has come to open other depths—the depths of horror.

There is beneath society, we must insist upon it, and until the day when ignorance shall be no more, there will be, the great cavern of evil.

This cave is beneath all and is the enemy of all. It is hate universal. This cave knows no philosophers; its poniard has never made a pen, its blackness has no relation to the sublime blackness of script. Never have the fingers of night, which are clutching beneath this asphyxiating vault, turned the leaves of a book or unfolded a journal. Babeuf is a speculator to Cartouche; Marat is an aristocrat to Schinderhannes. The object of this cave is the ruin of all things.

Of all things, including therein the upper saps, which it execrates. It does not undermine, in its hideous crawl, merely the social order of the time; it undermines philosophy, it undermines science, it undermines law, it un-

dermines human thought, it undermines civilization, it undermines revolution, it undermines progress. It goes by the naked names of theft, prostitution, murder, and assassination. It is darkness, and it desires chaos. It is vaulted in with ignorance.

All the others, those above it, have but one object—to suppress it. To that end philosophy and progress work through all their organs at the same time, through amelioration of the real as well as through contemplation of the absolute. Destroy the cave Ignorance and you destroy the mole Crime.

We will condense in a few words a portion of what we have just said. The only social peril is darkness.

Humanity is identity. All men are the same clay. No difference, here below at least, in predestination. The same darkness before, the same flesh during, the same ashes after life. But ignorance, mixed with the human composition, blackens it. This incurable ignorance possesses the heart of man, and there becomes evil.

III

BABET, GUEULEMER, CLAQUESOUS, AND MONTPARNASSE

A QUARTET of bandits, Claquesous, Gueulemer, Babet, and Montparnasse, ruled from 1830 to 1835 over the third sub-stage of Paris.

Gueulemer was a Hercules without a pedestal. His cave was the Arche-Marion sewer. He was six feet high, and had a marble chest, brazen biceps, cavernous lungs, a colossus' body, and a bird's skull. You would think you saw the Farnese Hercules dressed in duck pantaloons and a cotton-velvet waistcoat. Gueulemer, built in his sculptural fashion, could have subdued monsters; he found it easier to become one. Low forehead, large temples, less than forty, the foot of a goose, coarse short hair, a bushy cheek, a wild boar's beard; from this you see the man. His muscles asked for work, his stupidity would have none. This was a huge lazy force. He was an assassin through nonchalance. He was thought to be a creole. Probably there was a little of Marshal Brown in him, he having been a porter at Avignon in 1815. After this he had become a bandit.

The diaphaneity of Babet contrasted with the meatiness of Gueulemer. Babet was thin and shrewd. He was transparent, but impenetrable. You could see the light through his bones, but nothing through his eye. He professed to be a chemist. He had been a barkeeper for Bobèche and clown for Bobino. He had played vaudeville at St. Mihiel. He was an affected man, a great talker, who italicized his smiles and quoted his gestures. His business was to sell plaster busts and portraits of the "head of the government" in the street. Moreover, he pulled teeth. He had exhibited monstrosities at fairs, and had a booth with a trumpet and this placard: "Babet, dental artist, member of the academies, physical experimenter on metals and metalloids, extirpates teeth, removes stumps left by other dentists. Price: one tooth, 1 franc 50 centimes; two teeth, 2 francs; three teeth, 2 francs 50 centimes. Improve your opportunity." (This "improve your opportunity" meant: "get as many pulled as possible.") He had been married, and had had children. What had become of his wife and children he did not know. He had lost them as one loses his handkerchief. A remarkable exception in the obscure world to which he belonged. Babet read the papers. One day, during the time he had his family with him in his traveling booth, he had read in the "Messenger" that a woman had been delivered of a child, likely to live, which had the face of a calf, and he had exclaimed: "There is a piece of good luck! My wife hasn't the sense to bring me a child like that." Since then he had left everything "to take Paris in hand." His own expression.

What was Claquesous? He was night. Before showing himself he waited until the sky was daubed with black. At night he came out of a hole, which he went into again before day. Where was this hole? Nobody knew. In the most perfect obscurity, and to his accomplices he always turned his back when he spoke. Was his name Claquesous? No. He said: "My name is Nothing-at-all." If a candle was brought in he put on a mask. He was a ventriloquist. Babet said: "Claquesous is a night-bird with two voices." Claquesous was restless, roving, terrible. It was not certain that he had a name. Claquesous being a nickname; it was not certain that he had a voice,

his chest speaking oftener than his mouth; it was not certain he had a face, nobody having ever seen anything but his mask. He disappeared as if he sank into the ground; he came like an apparition.

A mournful sight was Montparnasse. Montparnasse was a child, less than 20, with a pretty face, lips like cherries, charming black locks, the glow of spring in his eyes; he had all the vices and aspired to all the crimes. The digestion of what was bad gave him an appetite for what was worse. He was the *gamin* turned vagabond, and the vagabond became an assassin. He was genteel, effeminate, graceful, robust, weak and ferocious. He wore his hat turned up on the left side to make room for the tuft of hair, according to the fashion of 1829. He lived by robbery. His coat was of the most fashionable cut, but threadbare. Montparnasse was a fashion-plate living in distress and committing murders. The cause of all the crimes of this young man was his desire to be well dressed. The first grisette who had said to him, "You are handsome," had thrown the stain of darkness into his heart, and had made a Cain of this Abel. Thinking that he was handsome he had desired to be elegant; now the first of elegances is idleness; idleness for a poor man is crime. Few prowlers were so much feared as Montparnasse. At eighteen he had already left several corpses on his track. More than one traveler lay in the shadow of this wretch, with extended arms and his face in a pool of blood. Frizzled, pomaded, with slender waist, hips like a woman, the bust of a Prussian officer, a buzz of admiration about him from the girls of the boulevard, an elaborately tied cravat, a slungshot in his pocket, a flower in his button-hole; such was this charmer of the sepulchre.

IV

COMPOSITION OF THE BAND

THESE four bandits formed a sort of Proteus, winding through the police and endeavoring to escape from the indiscreet glances of Vidocq "under various form, tree, flame, and fountain," lending each other their names and their tricks, concealing themselves in their own

shadow, each a refuge and a hiding-place for the others, throwing off their personalities, as one takes off a false nose at a masked ball, sometimes simplifying themselves till they are but one, sometimes multiplying themselves till Coco Lacour himself took them for a multitude.

These four men were not four men; it was a sort of mysterious robber with four heads preying upon Paris by wholesale; it was the monstrous polyp of evil which inhabits the crypt of society.

By means of their ramifications and the underlying network of their relations, Babet, Gueulemer, Claquesous, and Montparnasse controlled the general lying-in-wait business of the Department of the Seine. Originators of ideas in this line, men of midnight imagination came to them for the execution. The four villains being furnished with the single draft, they took charge of putting it on the stage. They worked upon scenario. They were always in condition to furnish a company proportioned and suitable to any enterprise which stood in need of aid, and was sufficiently lucrative. A crime being in search of arms, they sublet accomplices to it. They had a company of actors of darkness at the disposition of every cavernous tragedy.

They usually met at nightfall, their waking hour, in the waste grounds near La Salpêtrière. There they conferred. They had the twelve dark hours before them; they allotted their employ.

Patron Minette, such was the name which was given in subterranean society to the associations of these four men. In the old, popular, fantastic language, which now is dying out every day, *Patron Minette* means morning, just as *entre chien et loup* (between dog and wolf) means night. This appellation—*Patron Minette*—probably came from the hour at which their work ended, the dawn being the moment for the disappearance of phantoms and the separation of bandits. These four were known by this title. When the chief judge of the assizes visited Lacenaire in prison he questioned him in relation to some crime which Lacenaire denied. "Who did do it?" asked the judge. Lacenaire made this reply, enigmatical to the magistrate, but clear to the police: "*Patron Minette*, perhaps."

Sometimes a play may be imagined from the announcement of the characters; so, too, we may almost understand what a band is from the list of the bandits. We give—for these names are preserved in the documents—the appellations to which the principal subordinates of *Patron Minette* responded:

Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille.

Brujon. (There was a dynasty of Brujons; we shall say something about it hereafter.)

Boulatruelle, the road-mender, already introduced.

Laveuve.

Finistère.

Homer Hogu, negro.

Mardisoir.

Dépêche.

Fauntleroy, alias Bouquetière.

Glorieux, a liberated convict.

Barrecarrosse, alias M. Dupont.

L'esplanade-du-Sud.

Poussagrive.

Carmagnolet.

Kruideniers, alias Bizarro.

Mangedentelle.

Les-pieds-en-l'air.

Demi-liard, alias Deux-milliards.

Etc., etc.

We pass over some of them, and not the worst. These names have faces. They express not only beings, but species. Each of these names answers to a variety of these shapeless toadstools of the cellars of civilization.

These beings, by no means free with their faces, were not of those whom we see passing in the streets. During the day, wearied out by their savage nights, they went away to sleep, sometimes in the parget-kilns, sometimes in the abandoned quarries of Montmartre or Montrouge, sometimes in the sewers. They burrowed.

What has become of these men? They still exist. They have always existed. Horace speaks of them: "*Ambubaiarum collegia, pharmacopolæ, mendici, mimæ*;" and so long as society shall be what it is they will be what they are. Under the dark vault of their cave they are forever reproduced from the ooze of society. They return, spec-

tres, always the same; but they bear the same name no longer, and they are no longer in the same skins.

The individuals extirpated, the tribe still exists.

They have always the same faculties. From beggar to the prowler the race preserves its purity. They divine purses in pockets, they scent watches in fobs. Gold and silver to them are odorous. They are simple bourgeois of whom you might say that they have a robbable appearance. These men follow these bourgeois patiently. When a foreigner or a countryman passes by they have spider thrills.

Such men, when, toward midnight, on a lone boulevard, you meet them, or catch a glimpse of them, are terrifying. They seem not men, but forms fashioned of the living dark; you would say that they are generally an integral portion of the darkness, that they are not distinct from it, that they have no other soul than the gloom, and that it is only temporarily and to live for a few minutes a monstrous life, that they are disaggregated from the night.

What is required to exorcise these goblins? Light! Light in floods. No bat resists the dawn. Illuminate the bottom of society:

BOOK EIGHTH--THE NOXIOUS POOR

I

MARIUS, LOOKING FOR A GIRL WITH A HAT, MEETS
A MAN WITH A CAP

SUMMER passed, then autumn; winter came. Neither M. Leblanc nor the young girl had set foot in the Luxembourg. Marius had now but one thought—to see that sweet, that adorable face again. He searched continually; he searched everywhere; he found nothing. He was no longer Marius the enthusiastic dreamer, the resolute man, ardent yet firm, the bold challenger of destiny, the brain which projected and built future upon future, the young heart full of plans, projects, prides, ideas and desires; he was a lost dog. He fell into a melancholy. It was all over with him. Work disgusted him, walking fatigued him, solitude wearied him, vast nature, once so full of

forms, of illuminations, of voices, of counsels, of prospects, of horizons, of teachings, was now a void before him. It seemed to him that everything had disappeared.

He was still full of thought, for he could not be otherwise; but he no longer found pleasure in his thoughts. To all which they were silently but incessantly proposing to him, he answered in the gloom, "What is the use?"

He reproached himself a hundred times. "Why did I follow her? I was so happy in seeing her only! She looked upon me; was not that infinite? She had the appearance of loving me. Was not that everything? I desired to have what? There is nothing more after that. I was a fool. It is my fault," etc. Courfeyrac—to whom he confided nothing; that was his nature; but who found out a little of everything; that was his nature also—had begun by felicitating him upon being in love, and wondering at it withal; then seeing Marius fallen into this melancholy, he had at last said to him: "I see that you have been nothing but an animal. Here, come to the cabin."

Once, confiding in a beautiful September sun, Marius allowed himself to be taken to the Bal de Sceaux by Courfeyrac, Bossuet, and Grantaire, hoping—what a dream—that he might possibly find her there. We need not say that he did not see her whom he sought. "But yet it is here that all the lost women are to be found," muttered Grantaire aside. Marius left his friends at the ball and went back on foot, alone, tired, feverish, with sad and troubled eyes, in the night, overcome by the noise and dust of the joyous coaches full of singing-parties who passed by him returning from the festival, while he, discouraged, was breathing in the pungent odor of the walnut-trees by the wayside to restore his brain.

He lived more and more alone, bewildered, overwhelmed, given up to his inward anguish, walking to and fro in his grief like a wolf in a cage, seeking everywhere for the absent, stupefied with love.

At another time an accidental meeting produced a singular effect upon him. In one of the little streets in the neighborhood of the Boulevard des Invalides he saw a man dressed like a laborer wearing a cap with a long visor, from beneath which escaped a few locks of very white hair. Marius was struck by the beauty of this white hair and

noticed the man, who was walking with slow steps and seemed absorbed in painful meditation. Strangely enough, it appeared to him that he recognized M. Leblanc. It was the same hair, the same profile, as far as the cap allowed him to see, the same manner, only sadder. But why these workingman's clothes? What did that mean? What did this disguise signify? Marius was astounded. When he came to himself his first impulse was to follow the man. Who knows but he had at last caught the trace which he was seeking? At all events he must see the man again nearer and clear up the enigma. But this idea occurred to him too late—the man was now gone. He had taken some little side street and Marius could not find him again. This adventure occupied his mind for a few days and then faded away. "After all," said he to himself, "it is probably only a resemblance."

II

A WAIF

MARIUS still lived in the Gorbeau tenement. He paid no attention to anybody there.

At this time, it is true, there were no occupants remaining in the house but himself and those Jondrettes whose rent he had once paid, without having ever spoken, however, either to the father or to the mother or to the daughters. The other tenants had moved away or died or had been turned out for not paying their rent.

One day in the course of this winter the sun shone a little in the afternoon, but it was the 2d of February, that ancient Candlemas-day whose treacherous sun, the precursor of six weeks of cold, inspired Matthew Laensberg with these two lines, which have deservedly become classic:

Qu'il luise ou qu'il luiserne,
L'ours rentre en sa caverne.*

Marius had just left his; night was falling. It was his dinner-hour, for it was still necessary for him to go to

*Let it gleam or let it glimmer,
The bear returns into his cave.

dinner—alas! oh, infirmity of the ideal passions! He had just crossed his door-sill, which Ma'am Bougon was sweeping at that very moment, muttering at the same time this memorable monologue:

"What is there that is cheap now? Everything is dear. There is nothing but people's trouble that is cheap; that comes for nothing—people's trouble."

Marius went slowly up the boulevard toward the barrière, on the way to the Rue St. Jacques. He was walking thoughtfully, with his head down.

Suddenly he felt that he was elbowed in the dusk. He turned and saw two young girls in rags, one tall and slender, the other a little shorter, passing rapidly by, breathless, frightened and, apparently, in flight. They had met him, had not seen him and had jostled him in passing. Marius could see in the twilight their livid faces, their hair tangled and flying, their frightful bonnets, their tattered skirts and their naked feet. As they ran they were talking to each other. The taller one said in a very low voice:

"The *cognes* came. They just missed *pincer* me at the *demi-cercle*."

The other answered: "I saw them. I *cavalé, cavalé, cavalé*."

Marius understood, through this dismal argot, that the gendarmes, or the city police, had not succeeded in seizing these two girls and that the girls had escaped.

They plunged in under the trees of the boulevard behind him, and, for a few seconds, made a kind of dim whiteness in the obscurity which soon faded out.

Marius stopped for a moment.

He was about to resume his course when he perceived a little grayish packet on the ground at his feet. He stooped down and picked it up. It was a sort of envelope, which appeared to contain papers.

"Good," said he; "those poor creatures must have dropped this."

He retraced his steps, he called, he did not find them, he concluded they were already beyond hearing, put the packet in his pocket and went to dinner.

On his way, in an alley on the Rue Mouffetard, he saw a child's coffin, covered with a black cloth, placed upon

three chairs and lighted by a candle. The two girls of the twilight returned to his mind.

"Poor mothers," thought he. "There is one thing sadder than to see their children die—to see them lead evil lives."

Then, these shadows which had varied his sadness went out from his thoughts and he fell back into his customary train. He began to think of his six months of love and happiness in the open air and the broad daylight under the beautiful trees of the Luxembourg.

"How dark my life has become!" said he to himself. "Young girls still pass before me. Only formerly they were angels; now they are ghouls."

III

QUADRIFRONS

IN the evening, as he was undressing to go to bed, he happened to feel in his coat-pocket the packet which he had picked up on the boulevard. He had forgotten it. He thought it might be well to open it, and that the packet might, perhaps, contain the address of the young girls, if, in reality, it belonged to them, or at all events the information necessary to restore it to the person who had lost it.

He opened the envelope. It was unsealed and contained four letters, also unsealed.

The addresses were upon them.

All four exhaled an odor of wretched tobacco.

The first letter was addressed: "To Madame the Marchioness de Grucherau, Square opposite the Chamber of Deputies, No. —"

Marius said to himself that he should probably find in this letter the information of which he was in search, and that, moreover, as the letter was not sealed, probably it might be read without impropriety.

It was in these words:

Madame the Marchioness:

The virtue of kindness and piety is that which binds society most closely. Call up your Christian sentiment and cast a look of compassion upon this unfortunate Spanish victim of loyalty and attachment to the sacred cause of legitimacy, which he has paid for with his blood, consecrated his fortune, wholly, to defend this cause, and to day finds

himself in the greatest misery. He has no doubt that your honorable self will furnish him assistance to preserve an existence extremely painful for a soldier of education and of honor, full of wounds, reckons in advance upon the humanity which animates you and upon the interest which Madame the Marchioness feels in a nation so unfortunate. Their prayer will not be in vain, and their memory will retain her charming souvenir.

From my respectful sentiments, with which I have the honor to be, madame,

DON ALVARES.

Spanish captain of cavalry, royalist refuge in France, who finds himself traveling for his country and resources fail him to continue his travels.

No address was added to the signature. Marius hoped to find the address in the second letter, the superscription of which ran: "To Madame the Comtess de Montvernet, Rue Cassette, No. 9." Marius read as follows:

Madame the Comtess,

It is an unfortunate mother of a family of six children the last of whom is only 8 months old. Me sick since my last lying in abandoned by my husband for five months having no resource in the world the most frightful indigence.

In the hope of Madame the Comtesse, she has the honor to be, Madame, with a profound respect,

MOTHER BALIZARD.

Marius passed to the third letter, which was, like the preceding, a begging one; it read:

Monsieur Pabourgeot, elector, wholesale merchant milliner, Rue Saint Denis, corner of the Rue aux Fers:

I take the liberty to address you this letter to pray you to accord me the pretious favor of your sympathies and to interest you in a man of letters who has just sent a drama to the Théâtre Français. Its subject is historical, and the action takes place in Auvergne, in the time of the Empire; its style, I believe, is natural, laconic, and, perhaps, has some merit. There are verses to be sung in four places. The comic, the serious, the unforeseen, mingle themselves with the variety of the characters, and with a tint of romance spread lightly over all the plot, which advances mysteriously, and by striking terns to a denouement in the midst of several hits of splendid scenes.

My principal object is to satisfy the desire which animates progressively the man of our century, that is to say, fashion, that capricious and grotesque weathercock which changes almost with every new wind.

In spite of these qualities, I have reason to fear that jealousy, the selfishness of the privileged authors, may secure my exclusion from the theatre, for I am not ignorant of the distaste with which newcomers are swallowed.

Monsieur Pabourgeot, your just reputation as an enlightened pro-

tector of literary fokes emboldens me to send my daughter to you, who will expose to you our indigent situation, wanting bread and fire in this wynter season. To tell you that I pray you to accept the homage which I desire to offer you in my drama and in all those which I make, is to prove to you how ambitious I am of the honor of sheltering myself under your aegis, and of adorning my writings with your name. If you deign to honor me with the most modest offering, I shall occupy myself immediately in making a piese of verse for you to pay my tribut of recognition. This piese, which I shall endeavor to render as perfect as possible, will be sent to you before being inserted in the beginning of the drama and given upon the stage.

To Monsieur and Madam Pabourgeot, My most respectful homage.
 GENFLOT, man of letters.

P. S.—Were it only 40 sous.

Excuse me for sending my daughter and for not presenting myself, but sad motives of dress do not permit me, alas! to go out.

Marius finally opened the fourth letter. There was on the address: "To the beneficent gentleman of the Church Saint Jacques du Haut Pas. It contained these few lines:

Beneficent Man:

If you will deign to accompany my daughter, you will see a miserable calamity, and I will show you my certificates.

At the sight of these writings your generous soul will be moved with a sentiment of lively benevolence, for true philosophers always experience vivid emotions.

Agree, compassionate man, that one must experience the most cruel necessity, and that it is very painful, to obtain relief, to have it attested by authority as if we were not free to suffer and to die of inanition while waiting for some one to relieve our missery. The fates are very cruel to some and too lavish or too careful to others.

I await your presence or your offering, if you deign to make it, and I pray you to have the kindness to accept the respectful sentiments with which I am proud to be,

Truly magnanimous man, Your very humble and very obedient servant,
 P. FABANTOU, dramatic artist.

After reading these four letters Marius did not find himself much wiser than before.

In the first place none of the signers gave his address.

Then they seemed to come from four different individuals, Don Alvarès, Mother Balizard, the poet Genflot, and the dramatic artist Fabantou; but, strangely enough, these letters were all four written in the same hand.

What was the conclusion from that, unless that they came from the same person?

Moreover, and this rendered the conjecture still more probable, the paper, coarse and yellow, was the same in all four, the odor of tobacco was the same, and although there was an evident endeavor to vary the style, the same faults of orthography were reproduced with a very quiet certainty, and Genflot, the man of letters, was no more free from them than the Spanish captain.

To endeavor to unriddle this little mystery was a useless labor. If it had not been a waif, it would have had the appearance of a mystification. Marius was too sad to take a joke kindly even from chance, or to lend himself to the game which the street pavement seemed to wish to play with him. It appeared to him that he was like Colin Maillard among the four letters, which were mocking him.

Nothing, however, indicated that these letters belonged to the girls whom Marius had met on the boulevard. After all, they were but waste paper, evidently without value.

Marius put them back into the envelope, threw it into a corner, and went to bed.

About 7 o'clock in the morning he had got up and breakfasted, and was trying to set about his work when there was a gentle rap at his door.

As he owned nothing he never locked his door, except sometimes, and that very rarely, when he was about some pressing piece of work. And, indeed, even when absent, he left his key in the lock. "You will be robbed," said Ma'am Bougon. "Of what?" said Marius. The fact is, however, that one day somebody had stolen an old pair of boots, to the great triumph of Ma'am Bougon.

There was a second rap, very gentle, like the first.

"Come in," said Marius.

The door opened.

"What do you want, Ma'am Bougon?" asked Marius, without raising his eyes from the books and papers which he had on his table.

A voice, which was not Ma'am Bougon's, answered:

"I beg your pardon, M. ——"

It was a hollow, cracked, smothered, rasping voice, the voice of an old man, roughened by brandy and by liquor.

Marius turned quickly and saw a young girl.

IV

A ROSE IN MISERY

A GIRL who was quite young was standing in the half-opened door. The little round window through which the light found its way into the garret was exactly opposite the door, and lit up this form with a pallid light. It was a pale, puny, meagre creature; nothing but a chemise and a skirt covered a shivering and chilly nakedness. A string for a belt, a string for a head-dress, sharp shoulders protruding from the chemise, a blond and lymphatic pallor, dirty shoulder-blades, red hands, the mouth open and sunken, some teeth gone, the eyes dull, bold and drooping, the form of an unripe young girl, and the look of a corrupted old woman; fifty years joined with fifteen; one of those beings who are both feeble and horrible at once, and who make those shudder whom they do not make weep.

Marius arose and gazed with a kind of astonishment upon this being, so much like the shadowy forms which pass across our dreams.

The most touching thing about it was that this young girl had not come into the world to be ugly. In her early childhood she must have even been pretty. The grace of her youth was still struggling against the hideous old age brought on by debauchery and poverty. A remnant of beauty was dying out upon this face of 16, like the pale sun which is extinguished by frightful clouds at the dawn of a winter's day.

This face was not absolutely unknown to Marius. He thought he remembered having seen it somewhere.

"What do you wish, mademoiselle?" asked he.

The young girl answered with her voice like a drunken galley slave's:

"Here is a letter for you, M. Marius."

She called Marius by his name; he could not doubt that her business was with him; but what was this girl? how did she know his name?

Without waiting for an invitation she entered. She entered resolutely, looking at the whole room and the un-

made bed with a sort of assurance which chilled the heart. She was barefooted. Great holes in her skirt revealed her long limbs and her sharp knees. She was shivering.

She had really in her hand a letter, which she presented to Marius.

Marius, in opening this letter, noticed that the enormously large wafer was still wet. The message could not have come far. He read:

My amiable neighbor, young man:

I have learned your kindness toward me, that you have paid my rent 6 months ago. I bless you, young man. My eldest daughter will tell you that we have been without a morsel of bread for two days, four persons, and my spouse sick. If I am not deceived by my thoughts, I think I may hope that your generous heart will soften at this exposure and that the desire will subjugate you of being propitious to me by deigning to lavish upon me some light gift.

I am, with the distinguished consideration which is due to the benefactors of humanity,

JONDRETTE.

P. S.—My daughter will await your orders, dear M. Marius.

This letter, in the midst of the obscure accident which had occupied Marius' thoughts since the previous evening, was a candle in a cave. Everything was suddenly cleared up.

This letter came from the same source as the other four. It was the same writing, the same style, the same orthography, the same paper, the same odor of tobacco.

There were five missives, five stories, five names, five signatures, and a single signer. The Spanish captain, Don Alvarès, the unfortunate mother, Balizard, the dramatic poet, Genflot, the old comedy writer, Fabantou, were all four named Jondrette, if indeed the name of Jondrette himself was Jondrette.

During the now rather long time that Marius had lived in the tenement he had had, as we have said, but very few opportunities to see or even catch a glimpse of his very poor neighbors. His mind was elsewhere, and where the mind is thither the eyes are directed. He must have met the Jondrettes in the passage and on the stairs more than once, but to him they were only shadows; he had taken so little notice that on the previous evening he had brushed against the Jondrette girls upon the boulevard without recognizing them; for it was evidently they; and it was

with great difficulty that this girl who had just come into his room had awakened in him, beneath his disgust and pity, a vague remembrance of having met with her elsewhere.

Now he saw everything clearly. He understood that the occupation of his neighbor Jondrette, in his distress, was to work upon the sympathies of benevolent persons; that he procured their addresses, and that he wrote under assumed names letters to people he deemed rich and compassionate, which his daughters carried at their risk and peril; for this father was one who risked his daughters; he was playing a game with destiny and he put them into the stake. Marius understood, to judge by their flight in the evening, by their breathlessness, by their terror, by those words of argot which he had heard, that probably these unfortunate things were carrying on also some of the secret trades of darkness, and that from all this the result was, in the midst of human society constituted as it is, two miserable beings who were neither children nor girls nor women, a species of impure yet innocent monsters produced by misery.

Sad creatures, without name, without age, without sex, to whom neither good nor evil were any longer possible, and for whom, on leaving childhood, there is nothing more in this world; neither liberty, nor virtue, nor responsibility. Souls blooming yesterday, faded to-day; like those flowers which fall in the street and are bespattered with mud before a wheel crushes them.

Meantime, while Marius fixed upon her an astonished and sorrowful look, the young girl was walking to and fro in the room with the boldness of a spectre. She bustled about regardless of her nakedness. At times her chemise, unfastened and torn, fell almost to her waist. She moved the chairs; she disarranged the toilet articles on the bureau; she felt of Marius' clothes; she searched over what there was in the corners.

"Ah!" said she, "you have a mirror."

And she hummed, as if she had been alone, snatches of songs, light refrains which were made dismal by her harsh and guttural voice. Beneath this boldness could be perceived an indescribable constraint, restlessness, and humility. Effrontery is a shame.

Nothing was more sorrowful than to see her amusing herself and, so to speak, fluttering about the room with the movements of a bird which is startled by the light, or which has a wing broken. You felt that under other conditions of education and of destiny the gay and free manner of this young girl might have been something sweet and charming. Never among animals does the creature which is born to be a dove change into an osprey. That is seen only among men.

Marius was reflecting and let her go on.

She went to the table.

"Ah!" said she, "books!"

A light flashed through her glassy eye. She resumed, and her tone expressed that happiness of being able to boast of something to which no human creature is insensible:

"I can read, I can."

She hastily caught up the book which lay open on the table and read fluently:

"— Gen. Bauduin received the order to take five battalions of his brigade and carry the château of Hougomont, which is in the middle of the plain of Waterloo—"

She stopped:

"Ah, Waterloo! I know that. It is a battle in old times. My father was there; my father served in the armies. We are jolly good Bonapartists at home, that we are. Against English, Waterloo is."

She put down the book, took up a pen, and exclaimed:

"And I can write, too!"

She dipped the pen in the ink, and turning toward Marius:

"Would you like to see? Here, I am going to write a word to show."

And before he had had time to answer, she wrote upon a sheet of blank paper which was on the middle of the table: "The Cognes are here."

Then, throwing down the pen:

"There are no mistakes in spelling. You can look. We have received an education, my sister and I. We have not always been what we are. We were not made—"

Here she stopped, fixed her faded eye upon Marius, and

burst out laughing, saying in a tone which contained complete anguish stifled by complete cynicism:

“Bah!”

And she began to hum these words, to a lively air:

“J’ai faim, mon père,
Pas de fricot.
J’ai froid, ma mère,
Pas de tricot.
Grelotte,
Lolotte!
Sanglote,
Jacquot!”

Hardly had she finished this stanza when she exclaimed: “Do you ever go to the theatre, M. Marius? I do. I have a little brother who is a friend of some artists, and who gives me tickets sometimes. Now, I do not like the seats in the galleries. You are crowded, you are uncomfortable. There are sometimes coarse people there; there are also people who smell bad.”

Then she looked at Marius, put on a strange manner, and said to him:

“Do you know, M. Marius, that you are a very pretty boy?”

And at the same time the same thought occurred to both of them, which made her smile and made him blush.

She went to him, and laid her hand on his shoulder: “You pay no attention to me, but I know you, M. Marius. I meet you here on the stairs, and then I see you visiting a man named Father Mabeuf, who lives out by Austerlitz, sometimes, when I am walking that way. That becomes you very well, your tangled hair.”

Her voice tried to be very soft, but succeeded only in being very low. Some of her words were lost in their passage from the larynx to the lips, as upon a key-board in which some notes are missing.

Marius had drawn back quietly.

“Mademoiselle,” said he, with his cold gravity, “I have here a packet, which is yours, I think. Permit me to return it to you.”

And he handed her the envelope, which contained the four letters.

She clapped her hands and exclaimed:

"We have looked everywhere!"

Then she snatched the packet, and opened the envelope, saying:

"Lordy, Lordy! haven't we looked, my sister and I? And you have found it! on the boulevard, didn't you? It must have been on the boulevard? You see, this dropped when we ran. It was my brat of a sister who made the stupid blunder. When we got home we could not find it. As we did not want to be beaten, since that is needless, since that is entirely needless, since that is absolutely needless, we said at home that we had carried the letters to the persons, and that they told us: 'Nix!' Now here they are, these poor letters. And how did you know they were mine? Ah, yes! by the writing! It was you, then, that we knocked against last evening. We did not see you, really! I said to my sister: 'Is that a gentleman?' My sister said: 'I think it is a gentleman!'"

Meanwhile, she had unfolded the petition addressed "to the beneficent gentleman of the Church St. Jacques du Haut Pas."

"Here!" said she, "this is for the old fellow who goes to Mass. And, this, too, is the hour. I am going to carry it to him. He will give us something, perhaps, for breakfast."

Then she began to laugh, and added:

"Do you know what it will be if we have breakfast to-day? It will be that we shall have had our breakfast for day before yesterday, our dinner for day before yesterday, our breakfast for yesterday, our dinner for yesterday, all that at one time this morning. Yes! zounds! if you're not satisfied, stuff till you burst, dogs!"

This reminded Marius of what the poor girl had come to his room for.

He felt in his waistcoat, he found nothing there.

The young girl continued, seemingly to talk as if she were no longer conscious that Marius was there present.

"Sometimes I go away at night. Sometimes I do not come back. Before coming to this place, the other winter, we lived under the arches of the bridges. We hugged close to each other, so as not to freeze. My little sister cried. How chilly the water is! When I thought of drowning myself. I said: 'No, it is too cold.' I go all

alone when I want to, I sleep in the ditches sometimes. Do you know, at night, when I walk on the boulevard, I see the trees like gibbets, I see all the great black houses like the towers of Notre Dame, I imagine that the white walls are the river, I say to myself: 'Here, there is water there!' The stars are like illumination lamps, one would say that they smoke, and that the wind blows them out, I am confused, as if I had horses breathing in my ear; though it is night, I hear hand-organs and spinning-wheels, I don't know what. I think that somebody is throwing stones at me, I run without knowing it, it is all a whirl, all a whirl. When one has not eaten, it is very queer."

And she looked at him with a wandering eye.

After a thorough exploration of his pockets Marius had at last got together 5 francs and 16 sous. This was at the time all that he had in the world. "That is enough for my dinner to-day," thought he, "to-morrow we will see." He took the 16 sous, and gave the 5 francs to the young girl.

She took the piece eagerly.

"Good," said she, "there is some sunshine!"

And as if the sun had had the effect to loosen an avalanche of argot in her brain, she continued:

"Five francs! a shiner! a monarch! in this *piolle!* it is *chenâtre!* You are a good *mion!* I give you my *palpitant.* Bravo for the *fanandels!* Two days of *pivois!* and of *viandemuche!* and of *fricotmar!* we shall *pitancer chenu-ment!* and *bonne mouise!*"

She drew her chemise up over her shoulders, made a low bow to Marius, then a familiar wave of the hand, and moved toward the door, saying:

"Good-morning, monsieur. It is all the same. I am going to find my old man."

On her way she saw on the bureau a dry crust of bread moulding there in the dust; she sprang upon it and bit it, muttering:

"That is good! it is hard! it breaks my teeth!"

Then she went out.

V

THE JUDAS OF PROVIDENCE

FOR five years Marius had lived in poverty, in privation, in distress even, but he perceived that he had never known real misery. Real misery he had just seen. It was this sprite which had just passed before his eyes. In fact, he who has seen the misery of man only has seen nothing, he must see the misery of woman; he who has seen the misery of woman only has seen nothing, he must see the misery of childhood.

When man has reached the last extremity he comes, at the same time, to the last expedients. Woe to the defenceless beings who surround him! Work, wages, bread, fire, courage, willingness, all fail him at once. The light of day seems to die away without, the moral light dies out within; in this gloom man meets the weakness of woman and childhood, and puts them by force to ignominious uses.

Then all horrors are possible. Despair is surrounded by fragile walls which all open into vice or crime.

Health, youth, honor, the holy and passionate delicacies of the still tender flesh, the heart, virginity, modesty, that epidermis of the soul, are fatally disposed of by that blind groping which seeks for aid, which meets degradation, and which accommodates itself to it. Fathers, mothers, children, brothers, sisters, men, women, girls, cling together and almost grow together like a mineral formation, in that dark promiscuity of sexes, of relationships, of ages, of infancy, of innocence. They crouch down, back to back, in a kind of fate-hovel. They glance at one another sorrowfully. Oh, the unfortunate! how pallid they are! how cold they are! It seems as though they were on a planet much further from the sun than we.

This young girl was to Marius a sort of messenger from the night.

She revealed to him an entire and hideous aspect of the darkness.

Marius almost reproached himself with the fact that he had been so absorbed in his reveries and passion that he

had not until now cast a glance upon his neighbors. Paying their rent was a mechanical impulse; everybody would have had that impulse; but he, Marius, should have done better. What! a mere wall separated him from these abandoned beings, who lived by groping in the night without the pale of the living; he came in contact with them, he was in some sort the last link of the human race which they touched, he heard them live or rather breathe beside him, and he took no notice of them! every day at every moment he heard them through the wall, walking, going, coming, talking, and he did not lend his ear! and in these words there were groans, and he did not even listen, his thoughts were elsewhere, upon dreams, upon impossible glimmerings, upon loves in the sky, upon infatuations; and all the while human beings, his brothers in Jesus Christ, his brothers in the people, were suffering death agonies beside him! agonizing uselessly! he even caused a portion of their suffering and aggravated it. For had they had another neighbor, a less chimerical and more observant neighbor, an ordinary and charitable man, it was clear that their poverty would have been noticed, their signals of distress would have been seen, and long ago, perhaps, they would have been gathered up and saved! Undoubtedly they seemed very depraved, very corrupt, very vile, very hateful, even, but those are rare who fall without becoming degraded; there is a point, moreover, at which the unfortunate and the infamous are associated and confounded in a single word, a fatal word, *Les Misérables*; whose fault is it? And, then, is it not when the fall is lowest that charity ought to be greatest?

While he thus preached to himself, for there were times when Marius, like all truly honest hearts, was his own monitor and scolded himself more than he deserved; he looked at the wall which separated him from the Jondrettes, as if he could send his pitying glance through that partition to warn those unfortunate beings. The wall was a thin layer of plaster, upheld by laths and joists, through which, as we have just seen, voices and words could be distinguished perfectly. None but the dreamer, Marius, would not have perceived this before. There was no paper hung on the wall, either on the side of the Jondrettes or on Marius' side: its coarse construction was bare

to the eye. Almost unconsciously Marius examined this partition; sometimes reverie examines, observes, and scrutinizes, as thought would do. Suddenly he arose, he noticed toward the top, near the ceiling, a triangular hole, where three laths left a space between them. The plaster which should have stopped this hole was gone, and by getting upon the bureau he could see through that hole into the Jondrette garret. Pity has and should have its curiosity. This hole was a kind of Judas. It is lawful to look upon misfortune like a betrayer for the sake of relieving it. "Let us see what these people are," thought Marius, "and to what they are reduced."

He climbed upon the bureau put his eye to the crevice and looked.

VI

THE WILD MAN IN HIS LAIR

CITIES, like forests, have dens in which hide all their vilest and most terrible monsters. But in cities what hides thus is ferocious, unclean and petty, that is to say, ugly; in forests what hides is ferocious, savage and grand, that is to say, beautiful. Den for den, those of beasts are preferable to those of men. Caverns are better than the wretched holes which shelter humanity.

What Marius saw was a hole.

Marius was poor and his room was poorly furnished, but even as his poverty was noble his garret was clean. The den into which his eyes were at that moment directed was abject, filthy, fetid, infectious, gloomy, unclean. All the furniture was a straw chair, a rickety table, a few old broken dishes, and in two of the corners two indescribable pallets; all the light came from a dormer window of four panes, curtained with spider webs. Just enough light came through that loop-hole to make a man's face appear like the face of a phantom. The walls had a leprous look and were covered with seams and scars like a face disfigured by some horrible malady; a putrid moisture oozed from them. Obscene pictures could be discovered upon them coarsely sketched in charcoal.

The room which Marius occupied had a broken brick pavement; this one was neither paved nor floored; the in-

mates walked immediately upon the old plastering of the ruinous tenement, which had grown black under their feet. Upon this uneven soil where the dust was, as it were, incrustated, and which was virgin soil in respect only of the broom, were grouped at random constellations of socks, old shoes, and hideous rags; however, this room had a fireplace; so it rented for 40 francs a year. In the fireplace there was a little of everything: a chafing-dish, a kettle, some broken boards, rags hanging on nails, a bird-cage, some ashes, and even a little fire. Two embers were smoking sullenly.

The size of this garret added still more to its horror. It had projections, angles, black holes, recesses under the roof, bays, and promontories. Beyond were hideous, unfathomable corners, which seemed as if they must be full of spiders as big as one's fist, centipedes as large as one's foot, and perhaps even some unknown monster of humanity.

One of the pallets was near the door, the other near the window. Each had one end next the chimney, and both were opposite Marius. In a corner near the opening through which Marius was looking, hanging upon the wall in a black wooden frame, was a colored engraving at the bottom of which was written in large letters: "The Dream." It represented a sleeping woman and a sleeping child, the child upon the woman's lap, an eagle in a cloud with a crown in his beak, and the woman putting away the crown from the child's head, but without waking; in the background Napoleon in halo, leaning against a large blue column with a yellow capital adorned with this inscription:

"MARINGO
AUSTERLITS
IENA
WAGRAMME
ELOTT"

Below this frame a sort of wooden panel longer than it was wide was standing on the floor and leaning at an angle against the wall. It had the appearance of a picture set against the wall, of a frame probably daubed on the other side, of a pier glass taken down from a wall and forgotten to be hung again.

By the table, upon which Marius saw a pen, ink and paper, was seated a man of about 60, small, thin, livid, haggard, with a keen, cruel and restless air; a hideous harpy.

Lavater, if he could have studied this face, would have found in it a mixture of vulture and pettifogger; the bird of prey and the man of tricks rendering each other ugly and complete, the man of tricks making the bird of prey ignoble, the bird of prey making the man of tricks horrible.

This man had a long gray beard. He was dressed in a woman's chemise, which showed his shaggy breast and his naked arms bristling with gray hairs. Below this chemise were a pair of muddy pantaloons and boots from which the toes stuck out.

He had a pipe in his mouth and was smoking. There was no more bread in the den, but there was tobacco.

He was writing, probably some such letter as those which Marius had read.

On one corner of the table was an old odd volume with a reddish cover, the size of which, the old duodecimo of series of books, betrayed that it was a novel. On the cover was displayed the following title, printed in huge capitals: "God, the King, Honor and the Ladies, by Duncray Duminil, 1814."

As he wrote the man talked aloud, and Marius heard his words:

"To think that there is no equality even when we are dead! Look at Père Lachaise! The great, those who are rich, are in the upper part, in the avenue of the acacias, which is paved. They can go there in a carriage. The low, the poor, the unfortunate, they are put in the lower part, where there is mud up to the knees, in holes, in the wet. They are put there so that they may rot sooner. You can not go to see them without sinking into the ground."

Here he stopped, struck his fist on the table, and added, gnashing his teeth:

"Oh, I could eat the world!"

A big woman, who might have been 40 years old or 100, was squatting near the fireplace upon her bare feet.

She also was dressed only in a chemise and a knit skirt

patched with pieces of old cloth. A coarse tow apron covered half the skirt. Although this woman was bent and drawn up into herself, it could be seen that she was very tall. She was a kind of giantess by the side of her husband. She had hideous hair, light red sprinkled with gray, that she pushed back from time to time with her huge shining hands which had flat nails.

Lying on the ground at her side, wide open, was a volume of the same appearance as the other, and probably of the same novel.

Upon one of the pallets Marius could discern a sort of slender little wan girl, seated, almost naked, with her feet hanging down, having the appearance neither of listening nor of seeing, nor of living.

The youngest sister, doubtless, of the one who had come to his room.

She appeared to be 11 or 12 years old. On examining her attentively he saw that she must be 14. It was the child who, the evening before, on the boulevard, said: "*I cavalé, cavalé, cavalé!*"

She was of that sickly species which long remains backward, then pushes forward rapidly and all at once. These sorry human plants are produced by want. These poor creatures have neither childhood nor youth. At 15 they appear to be 12; at 16 they appear to be 20. To-day a little girl, to-morrow a woman. One would say that they leap through life to have done with it sooner.

This being now had the appearance of a child.

Nothing, moreover, indicated the performance of any labor in this room; not a loom, not a wheel, not a tool. In one corner a few scraps of iron of an equivocal appearance. It was that gloomy idleness which follows despair and which precedes the death agony.

Marius looked for some time into that funereal interior, more fearful than the interior of a tomb; for here were felt the movements of a human soul and the palpitation of life.

The garret, the cellar, the deep ditch, in which some of the wretched crawl at the bottom of the social edifice, are not the sepulchre itself; they are its ante-chamber; but like those rich men who display their greatest magnificence at the entrance of their palace, death, who is

close at hand, seems to display his greatest wretchedness in this vestibule.

The man became silent, the woman did not speak, the girl did not seem to breathe. Marius could hear the pen scratching over the paper.

The man muttered out, without ceasing to write: "Rabble! rabble! all is rabble!"

This variation upon the ejaculation of Solomon drew a sigh from the woman.

"My darling, be calm," said she. "Do not hurt yourself, dear. You are too good to write to all those people, my man."

In poverty bodies hug close to each other, as in the cold, but hearts grow distant. This woman, according to all appearance, must have loved this man with as much love as was in her; but, probably, in the repeated mutual reproaches which grew out of the frightful distress that weighed upon them all, this love had become extinguished. She now felt toward her husband nothing more than the ashes of affection. Still the words of endearment, as often happens, had survived. She said to him: "Dear, my darling, my man," etc., with her lips, her heart was silent.

The man returned to his writing.

VII

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

MARIUS with a heavy heart was about to get down from the sort of observatory which he had extemporized, when a sound attracted his attention and induced him to remain in his place.

The door of the garret was hastily opened. The eldest daughter appeared upon the threshold. On her feet she had coarse men's shoes, covered with mud, which had been spattered as high as her red ankles, and she was wrapped in a ragged old gown which Marius had not seen upon her an hour before, but which she had probably left at his door that she might inspire the more pity and which she must have put on upon going out. She came in, pushed the door to behind her, stopped to take breath, for she was

quite breathless, then cried with an expression of joy and triumph: "He is coming!"

The father turned his eyes, the woman turned her head, the younger sister did not stir.

"Who?" asked the father.

"The gentleman!"

"The philanthropist?"

"Yes."

"Of the Church of St. Jacques?"

"Yes."

"That old man?"

"Yes."

"He is going to come?"

"He is behind me."

"You are sure?"

"I am sure."

"There, true, he is coming?"

"He is coming in a fiacre."

"In a fiacre. It is Rothschild?"

The father arose.

"How are you sure? If he is coming in a fiacre, how is it that you get here before him? You gave him the address, at least? You told him the last door at the end of the hall on the right, provided he does not make a mistake? You found him at the church, then? Did he read my letter? What did he say to you?"

"Tut, tut, tut!" said the girl: "how you run on, good man! I'll tell you: I went into the church, he was at his usual place; I made a courtesy to him and I gave him the letter, he read it and said to me: 'Where do you live, my child?' I said: 'Monsieur, I will show you.' He said to me: 'No, give me your address; my daughter has some purchases to make, I am going to take a carriage and I will get to your house as soon as you do.' I gave him the address. When I told him the house, he appeared surprised and hesitated an instant, then he said: 'It is all the same, I will go.' When Mass was over I saw him leave the church with his daughter. I saw them get into a fiacre. And I told him plainly the last door at the end of the hall on the right."

"And how do you know that he will come?"

"I just saw the fiacre coming into the Rue du Petit Banquier. That is what made me run."

"How do you know it is the same fiacre?"

"Because I had noticed the number."

"What is the number?"

"Four hundred and forty."

"Good, you are a clever girl."

The girl looked resolutely at her father, and, showing the shoes which she had on, said: "A clever girl, that may be, but I tell you that I shall never put on these shoes again, and that I will not do it, for health first and then for decency's sake. I know nothing more provoking than soles that go squeaking and go ghee, ghee, ghee, all along the street. I would rather go barefoot."

"You are right," answered the father, in a mild tone which contrasted with the rudeness of the young girl, "but they would not let you go into the churches; the poor must have shoes. People do not go to God's house barefooted," added he, bitterly. Then returning to the subject which occupied his thoughts: "And you are sure, then, sure that he is coming?"

"He is at my heels," said she.

The man sprang up. There was a sort of illumination on his face.

"Wife!" cried he, "you hear? Here is the philanthropist. Put out the fire."

The astounded woman did not stir.

The father, with the agility of a mountebank, caught a broken pot which stood on the mantel, and threw some water upon the embers.

Then turning to his eldest daughter: "You! unbottom the chair!"

His daughter did not understand him at all.

He seized the chair, and with a kick he ruined the seat. His leg went through it.

As he drew out his leg, he asked his daughter: "Is it cold?"

"Very cold. It snows."

The father turned toward the younger girl, who was on the pallet near the window, and cried in a thundering voice: "Quick! off the bed, good-for-nothing! Will you never do anything? Break a pane of glass!"

The little girl sprang off the bed trembling.

"Break a pane of glass!" said he again.

The child was speechless.

"Do you hear me?" repeated the father; "I tell you to break a pane!"

The child, with a sort of terrified obedience, rose upon tiptoe and struck her fist into a pane. The glass broke and fell with a crash.

"Good!" said the father.

He was serious, yet rapid. His eye ran hastily over all the nooks and corners of the garret.

You would have said he was a general making his final preparations at the moment when the battle was about to begin.

The mother, who had not yet said a word, got up and asked in a slow, muffled tone, her words seeming to come out as if curdled:

"Dear, what is it you want to do?"

"Get into bed!" answered the man. His tone admitted of no deliberation. The mother obeyed, and threw herself heavily upon one of the pallets.

Meanwhile a sob was heard in a corner.

"What is that?" cried the father.

The younger daughter, without coming out of the darkness into which she had shrunk, showed her bleeding fist. In breaking the glass she had cut herself; she had gone to her mother's bed and she was weeping in silence.

It was the mother's turn to rise and cry out:

"You see, now, what stupid things you are doing? Breaking your glass she has cut herself!"

"So much the better!" said the man. "I knew she would."

"How so much the better?" resumed the woman.

"Silence!" replied the father. "I suppress the liberty of the press."

Then tearing the chemise which he had on he made a bandage with which he hastily wrapped up the little girl's bleeding wrist.

That done, his eye fell upon the torn chemise with satisfaction.

"And the chemise, too," said he; "all this has a good appearance."

An icy wind whistled at the window and came into the

room. The mist from without entered and spread about like a whitish wadding picked apart by invisible fingers. Through the broken pane the falling snow was seen. The cold promised the day before by the Candlemas sun had come indeed.

The father cast a glance about him as if to assure himself that he had forgotten nothing. He took an old shovel and spread ashes over the moistened embers in such a way as to hide them completely.

Then rising and standing with his back to the chimney: "Now," said he, "we can receive the philanthropist."

VIII

THE SUNBEAM IN THE HOLE

THE large girl went to her father and laid her hand on his.

"Feel how cold I am," said she.

"Pshaw!" answered the father. "I am a good deal colder than that."

The mother cried impetuously: "You always have everything better than the rest, even pain."

"Down!" said the man.

The mother, after a peculiar look from the man, held her peace.

There was a moment of silence in the den. The eldest daughter was scraping the mud off the bottom of her dress with a careless air, the young sister continued to sob; the mother had taken her head in both hands and was covering her with kisses, saying to her, in a low tone: "My treasure, I beg of you, it will be nothing; do not cry, you will make your father angry."

"No!" cried the father, "on the contrary, sob! sob! that does finely."

Then turning to the eldest: "Ah! but he does not come! if he was not coming I shall have put out my fire, knocked the bottom out of my chair, torn my chemise, and broken my window for nothing."

"And cut the little girl!" murmured the mother.

"Do you know," resumed the father, "that it is as cold as a dog in this devilish garret? If this man should not come! Oh! that is it! he makes us wait for him! He

says: 'Well! they will wait for me! that is what they are for!' Oh! how I hate them, and how I would strangle them with joy and rejoicing, enthusiasm and satisfaction, these rich men—all the rich! These professed charitable men, who make their plums, who go to Mass, who follow the priesthood—preachy, preachy! who give in to the cowls and who think themselves above us, and who come to humiliate us and to bring us clothes—as they call them! rags, which are not worth four sous, and bread! That is not what I want of the rabble! I want money! But money—never! because they say that we would go and drink it, and that we are drunkards and do-nothings! And what, then, are they, and what have they been in their time? Thieves? They would not have got rich without that. Oh! somebody ought to take society by the four corners of the sheet and toss it all into the air! Everything would be crushed, it is likely, but at least nobody would have anything; there would be so much gained! But what, now, is he doing, your mug of a benevolent gentleman!—is he coming? The brute may have forgotten the address! I will bet that the old fool—”

Just then there was a light tap at the door, the man rushed forward and opened it, exclaiming, with many low bows and smiles of adoration: “Come in, monsieur! Deign to come in, my noble benefactor, as well as your charming young lady.”

A man of mature age and a young girl appeared at the door of the garret.

Marius had not left his place. What he felt at that moment escapes human language.

It was she.

Whoever has loved knows all the radiant meaning contained in the three letters of this word—she.

It was, indeed, she. Marius could hardly discern her through the luminous vapor which suddenly spread over his eyes. It was that sweet, absent being, that star which had been his light for six months; it was that eye, that brow, that mouth, that beautiful vanished face which had produced night when it went away. The vision had been in an eclipse; it was reappearing.

She appeared again in this gloom, in this garret, in this shapeless den, in this horror!

Marius shuddered desperately. What! it was she! the beating of his heart disturbed his sight. He felt ready to melt into tears. What! at last he saw her again after having sought for her so long! it seemed to him that he had lost his soul and that he had just found it again.

She was still the same, a little paler only, her delicate face was set in a violet velvet hat, her form was hidden under a black satin pelisse, below her long dress he caught a glimpse of her little foot squeezed into a silk buskin.

She was still accompanied by M. Leblanc.

She stepped into the room and laid a large package on the table.

The elder Jondrette girl had retreated behind the door and was looking upon that velvet hat, that silk dress, and that charming, happy face with an evil eye.

IX

JONDRETTE WEEPS ALMOST

THE den was so dark that people who came from out-doors felt as if they were entering a cellar on coming in. The two new-comers stepped forward, therefore, with some hesitation, hardly discerning the dim forms about them, while they were seen and examined with perfect ease by the tenants of the garret, whose eyes were accustomed to this twilight.

M. Leblanc approached with his kind and compassionate look and said to the father: "Monsieur, you will find in this package some new clothes, some stockings, and some new coverlids."

"Our angelic benefactor overwhelms us," said Jondrette, bowing down to the floor. Then, stooping to his eldest daughter's ear, while the two visitors were examining this lamentable abode, he added rapidly, in a whisper: "Well! what did I tell you? rags? no money. They are all alike! Tell me, how was the letter to this old blubber-lip signed?"

"Fabantou," answered the daughter.

"The dramatic artist, good!"

This was lucky for Jondrette, for at that very moment M. Leblanc turned toward him and said to him, with the appearance of one who is trying to recollect a name: "I see that you are indeed to be pitied, M. ——"

"Fabantou," said Jondrette, quickly.

"M. Fabantou, yes, that is it. I remember."

"Dramatic artist, monsieur, and who has had his successes."

Here Jondrette evidently thought the moment come to make an impression upon the "philanthropist." He exclaimed, in a tone of voice which belongs to the braggadocio of the juggler at a fair, and, at the same time, to the humility of a beggar on the highway: "Pupil of Talma! Monsieur! I am a pupil of Talma! Fortune once smiled on me. Alas! now it is the turn of misfortune. Look, my benefactor, no bread, no fire. My poor darlings have no fire! My only chair unseated! A broken window! in such weather as is this! My spouse in bed, sick!"

"Poor woman!" said M. Leblanc.

"My child injured!" added Jondrette.

The child, whose attention had been diverted by the arrival of the strangers, was staring at "the young lady" and had ceased her sobbing.

"Why don't you cry? why don't you scream?" said Jondrette to her in a whisper.

At the same time he pinched her injured hand. All this with the skill of a juggler.

The little one uttered loud cries.

The adorable young girl whom Marius in his heart, called "his Ursula," went quickly to her.

"Poor, dear child!" said she.

"Look, my beautiful young lady," pursued Jondrette, "her bleeding wrist! It is an accident which happened in working at a machine by which she earned six sous a day. It may be necessary to cut off her arm."

"Indeed!" said the old gentleman, alarmed.

The little girl, taking this seriously, began to sob again beautifully.

"Alas, yes, my benefactor!" answered the father.

For some moments Jondrette had been looking at "the philanthropist" in a strange manner. Even while speaking he seemed to scrutinize him closely as if he were trying to recall some reminiscence. Suddenly, taking advantage of a moment when the new-comers were anxiously questioning the smaller girl about her mutilated hand, he

passed over to his wife, who was lying in her bed, appearing to be overwhelmed and stupid, and said to her quickly and in a very low tone: "Notice that man!"

Then turning toward M. Leblanc and continuing his lamentation:

"You see, monsieur! my whole dress is nothing but a chemise of my wife's! and that all torn! in the heart of winter. I can not go out for lack of a coat. If I had a sign of a coat I should go to see Mdlle. Mars, who knows me and of whom I am a great favorite. She is still living in the Rue de la Tour des Dames, is not she? You know, monsieur, we have played together in the provinces. I shared her laurels. Celimène would come to my relief, monsieur! Elmira would give alms to Belisarius! But no, nothing! And not a sou in the house! My wife sick, not a sou! My daughter dangerously injured, not a sou! My spouse has choking fits. It is her time of life, and then the nervous system has something to do with it. She needs aid and my daughter also! But the doctor! but the druggist! how can I pay them? not a penny! I would fall on my knees before a penny, monsieur! You see how the arts are fallen! And do you know, my charming young lady, and you, my generous patron, do you know, you who breathe virtue and goodness and who perfume that church where my daughter, in going to say her prayers, sees you every day! For I bring up my daughters religiously, monsieur. I have not allowed them to take to the theatre. Ah! the rogues! that I should see them tripping! I do not jest! I fortify them with sermons about honor, about morals, about virtue! Ask them! They must walk straight. They have a father. They are none of those unfortunates who begin by having no family and who end by marrying the public. They are Mdlle. Nobody and become Mme. Everybody. Thank heaven! none of that in the Fabantou family! I mean to educate them virtuously, and that they may be honest, and that they may be genteel, and that they may believe in God's sacred name! Well, monsieur, my worthy monsieur, do you know what is going to happen to-morrow? To-morrow is the 4th of February, the fatal day, the last delay that my landlord will give me; if I do not pay him this evening, to-morrow my eldest daughter, myself, my spouse, with her fever; my child,

with her wound—we shall all four be turned out of doors and driven off into the street, upon the boulevard; without shelter, into the rain, upon the snow. You see, monsieur, I owe four quarters—a year! that is, sixty francs.”

Jondrette lied. Four quarters would have made but forty francs, and he could not have owed for four, since it was not six months since Marius had paid for two.

M. Leblanc took five francs from his pocket and threw them on the table.

Jondrette had time to mutter into the ear of his elder daughter: “The whelp! what does he think I am going to do with his five francs? They will not pay for my chair and my window! I must make my expenses!”

Meantime M. Leblanc had taken off a large brown overcoat, which he wore over his blue surtout, and hung it over the back of the chair.

“M. Fabantou,” said he, “I have only these five francs with me; but I am going to take my daughter home and I will return this evening; is it not this evening that you have to pay?”

Jondrette’s face lighted up with a strange expression. He answered quickly: “Yes, my noble monsieur. At eight o’clock I must be at my landlord’s.”

“I will be here at six o’clock and I will bring you the sixty francs.”

“My benefactor!” cried Jondrette, distractedly.

And he added, in an undertone: “Take a good look at him, wife!”

M. Leblanc took the arm of the beautiful young girl and turned toward the door.

“Till this evening, my friend,” said he.

“Six o’clock,” said Jondrette.

“Six o’clock precisely.”

Just then the overcoat on the chair caught the eye of the eldest daughter.

“Monsieur,” said she, “you forget your coat.”

Jondrette threw a crushing glance at his daughter, accompanied by a terrible shrug of the shoulders.

M. Leblanc turned and answered with a smile: “I do not forget it, I leave it.”

“Oh, my patron!” said Jondrette; “my noble benefac-

tor, I am melting into tears! Allow me to conduct you to your carriage."

"If you go out," replied M. Leblanc, "put on this overcoat. It is really very cold."

Jondrette did not make him say it twice. He put on the brown overcoat very quickly.

And they went out, all three, Jondrette preceding the two strangers.

X

PRICE OF PUBLIC CABRIOLETS: TWO FRANCS AN HOUR

MARIUS had lost nothing of all this scene, and yet in reality he had seen nothing of it. His eyes had remained fixed upon the young girl, his heart had, so to speak, seized upon her and enveloped her entirely from her first step into the garret. During the whole time she had been there he had lived that life of ecstasy which suspends material perceptions and precipitates the whole soul upon a single point. He contemplated, not that girl, but that light in a satin pelisse and a velvet hat. Had the star Sirius entered the room he would not have been more dazzled.

While the young girl was opening the bundle, unfolding the clothes and the coverlids, questioning the sick mother kindly and the little injured girl tenderly, he watched all her motions, he endeavored to hear her words. He knew her eyes, her forehead, her beauty, her stature, her gait—he did not know the sound of her voice. He thought he had caught a few words of it once at the Luxembourg, but he was not absolutely sure. He would have given ten years of his life to hear it, to be able to carry a little of that music in his soul. But all was lost in the wretched displays and trumpet blasts of Jondrette. This added a real anger to the transport of Marius. He brooded her with his eyes. He could not imagine that it really was that divine creature which he saw in the midst of the misshapen beings of this monstrous den. He seemed to see a humming-bird among toads.

When he went out he had but one thought, to follow her, not to give up her track, not to leave her without knowing where she lived. not to lose her again, at least,

after having so miraculously found her. He leaped down from the bureau and took his hat. As he was putting his hand on the bolt, and was just going out, he reflected and stopped. The hall was long, the stairs steep, Jondrette a great talker, M. Leblanc doubtless had not yet got into his carriage; if he should turn round in the passage, or on the stairs, or on the door-step, and perceive him, Marius, in that house, he would certainly be alarmed and would find means to escape him anew, and it would be all over at once. What was to be done? wait a little? but during the delay the carriage might go. Marius was perplexed. At last he took the risk and went out of his room.

There was nobody in the hall. He ran to the stairs. There was nobody on the stairs. He hurried down and reached the boulevard in time to see a fiacre turn the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier and return into the city.

Marius rushed in that direction. When he reached the corner of the boulevard he saw the fiacre again going rapidly down the Rue Mouffetard; the fiacre was already at a long distance, there was no means of reaching it; what should he do? run after it? impossible; and then from the carriage they would certainly notice a man running at full speed in pursuit of them, and the father would recognize him. Just at this moment, marvelous and unheard-of good fortune, Marius saw a public cab passing along the boulevard, empty. There was but one course to take, to get into this cab and follow the fiacre. That was sure, effectual, and without danger.

Marius made a sign to the driver to stop, and cried to him: "Right away!"

Marius had no cravat; he had on his old working-coat, some of the buttons of which were missing, and his shirt was torn in one of the plaits of the bosom.

The driver stopped, winked, and reached his left hand toward Marius, rubbing his forefinger gently with his thumb.

"What?" said Marius.

"Pay in advance," said the driver.

Marius remembered that he had only sixteen sous with him.

"How much?" he asked.

"Forty sous."

"I will pay when I get back."

The driver made no reply, but to whistle an air from "La Palisse" and whip up his horse.

Marius saw the cab move away with a bewildered air. For the want of twenty-four sous he was losing his joy, his happiness, his love! he was falling back into night! he had seen, and he was again becoming blind. He thought bitterly, and it must indeed be said, with deep regret, of the five francs he had given that very morning to that miserable girl. Had he had those five francs he would have been saved, he would have been born again, he would have come out of limbo and darkness, he would have come out of his isolation, his spleen, his bereavement; he would have again knotted the black thread of his destiny with that beautiful golden thread which had just floated before his eyes and broken off once more! He returned to the old tenement in despair.

He might have thought that M. Leblanc had promised to return in the evening, and that he had only to take better care to follow him then; but in his rapt contemplation he hardly understood it.

Just as he went up the stairs, he noticed on the other side of the boulevard, beside the deserted wall of the Rue de la Barrière des Gobelins, Jondrette in the "philanthropist's" overcoat, talking to one of those men of dangerous appearance, who, by common consent, are called "prowlers of the barrières"; men of equivocal faces, suspicious speech, who have an appearance of evil intentions, and who usually sleep by day, which leads us to suppose that they work by night.

These two men quietly talking, while the snow was whirling about them in its fall, made a picture which a policeman certainly would have observed, but which Marius hardly noticed.

Nevertheless, however mournful was the subject of his reflections, he could not help saying to himself that this prowler of the barrières with whom Jondrette was talking resembled a certain Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, whom Courfeyrac had once pointed out to him, and who passed in the quartier for a very dangerous night wanderer. We have seen this man's name in the preced-

ing book. This Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, figured afterward in several criminal trials, and has since become a celebrated scoundrel. He was still at that time only a notorious scoundrel. He is now a matter of tradition among bandits and assassins. He was the head of a school near the close of the last reign. And in the evening, at nightfall, at the hour when crowds gather and speak low, he was talked about at the La Force in La Fosse aux Lions. You might even, in that prison, just at the spot where that privy sewer, which served for the astonishing escape of thirty prisoners in broad day in 1843, passes under the encircling passageway; you might, above the flagging of that sewer, read the name, "Panchaud," audaciously cut by himself upon the outer wall in one of his attempts to escape. In 1832, the police already had him under their eye, but he had not yet really made his début.

XI

OFFERS OF SERVICE BY MISERY TO GRIEF

MARIUS mounted the stairs of the old tenement with slow steps; just as he was going into his cell he perceived in the hall behind him the elder Jondrette girl, who was following him. This girl was odious to his sight; it was she who had his five francs; it was too late to ask her for them, the cab was there no longer, the fiacre was far away. Moreover, she would not give them back to him. As to questioning her about the address of the people who had just come, that was useless; it was plain that she did not know, since the letter signed Fabantou was addressed "to the beneficent gentleman of the Church St. Jacques du Haut Pas."

Marius went into his room and pushed to his door behind him.

It did not close; he turned and saw a hand holding the door partly open.

"What is it?" he asked; "who is there?"

It was the Jondrette girl.

"Is it you?" said Marius almost harshly, "you again? What do you want of me?"

She seemed thoughtful and did not look at him. She

had lost the assurance which she had had in the morning. She did not come in, but stopped in the dusky hall, where Marius perceived her through the half-open door.

"Come now, will you answer?" said Marius. "What is it you want of me?"

She raised her mournful eyes, in which a sort of confused light seemed to shine dimly, and said to him: "M. Marius, you look sad. What is the matter with you?"

"With me?"

"Yes, you."

"There is nothing the matter with me."

"Yes!"

"No!"

"I tell you there is!"

"Let me be quiet!"

Marius pushed the door anew; she still held it back.

"Stop," said she, "you are wrong. Though you may not be rich, you were good this morning. Be so again now. You gave me something to eat; tell me now what ails you. You are troubled at something, that is plain. I do not want you to be troubled. What must be done for that? Can I serve you in anything? Let me. I do not ask your secrets, you need not tell them to me, but yet I may be useful. I can certainly help you, since I help my father. When it is necessary to carry letters, go into houses, inquire from door to door, find out an address, follow somebody, I do it. Now, you can certainly tell me what is the matter with you. I will go and speak to the persons; sometimes for somebody to speak to the persons is enough to understand things, and it is all arranged. Make use of me."

An idea came into Marius' mind. What straw do we despise when we feel that we are sinking?

He approached the girl.

"Listen," said he to her kindly.

She interrupted him with a flash of joy in her eyes.

"Oh, yes! Talk softly to me! I like that better."

"Well," resumed he, "you brought this old gentleman here with his daughter."

"Yes."

"Do you know their address?"

"No."

"Find it for me."

The girl's eyes, which had been gloomy, had become joyful. They now became dark.

"Is that what you want?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Do you know them?"

"No."

"That is to say," she said hastily, "you do not know her but you want to know her."

This "them" which had become "her" had an indescribable significance and bitterness.

"Well, can you do it?" said Marius.

"You shall have the beautiful young lady's address."

There was again in these words, "the beautiful young lady," an expression which made Marius uneasy.

He continued: "Well, no matter! the address of the father and daughter. Their address, yes!"

She looked steadily at him.

"What will you give me?"

"Anything you wish!"

"Anything I wish?"

"Yes."

"You shall have the address."

She looked down, and then with a hasty movement closed the door.

Marius was alone.

He dropped into a chair with his head and both elbows on the bed, swallowed up in thoughts which he could not grasp, and as if he were in a fit of vertigo. All that had taken place since morning, the appearance of the angel, her disappearance, what this poor creature had just said to him, a gleam of hope floating in an ocean of despair—all this was confusedly crowding his brain.

Suddenly he was violently awakened from his reverie.

He heard the loud, harsh voice of Jondrette pronounce these words for him, full of the strangest interest: "I tell you that I am sure of it, and that I recognized him!"

Of whom was Jondrette talking? He had recognized whom? M. Leblanc—the father of "his Ursula"? What! did Jondrette know him? Was Marius just about to get in this sudden and unexpected way all the information, the lack of which made his life obscure to himself? Was

he at last to know whom he loved, who this young girl was? who her father was? Was the thick shadow which enveloped them to be rolled away? was the veil to be rent? Oh, heavens!

He sprang, rather than mounted, upon the bureau, and resumed his place near the little aperture in the partition.

He again saw the interior of the Jondrette den.

XII

USE OF M. LEBLANC'S FIVE-FRANC PIECE

NOTHING had changed in the appearance of the family, except that the wife and daughters had opened the package and put on the woolen stockings and underclothes. Two new coverlids were thrown over the two beds.

Jondrette had, evidently, just come in. He had not yet recovered his regular breathing. His daughters were sitting on the floor near the fireplace, the elder binding up the hand of the younger. His wife lay as if exhausted upon the pallet near the fireplace, with an astonished countenance. Jondrette was walking up and down the garret with rapid strides. His eyes had an extraordinary look.

The woman, who seemed timid and stricken with stupor before her husband, ventured to say to him: "What, really? You are sure?"

"Sure! It was eight years ago, but I recognize him! Ah! I recognize him! I recognized him immediately. What! it did not strike you?"

"No."

"And yet I told you to pay attention. But it is the same height, the same face, hardly any older; there are some men who do not grow old. I don't know how they do it. It is the same tone of voice. He is better dressed, that is all! Ah! mysterious old devil, I have got you all right!"

He checked himself, and said to his daughters: "You go out! It is queer that it did not strike your eye."

They got up to obey.

The mother stammered out: "With her sore hand?"

"The air will do her good," said Jondrette. "Go along."

It was clear that this man was one of those to whom there is no reply. The two girls went out.

Just as they were passing the door the father caught the elder by the arm, and said, with a peculiar tone:

"You will be here at 5 o'clock precisely. Both of you. I shall need you."

Marius redoubled his attention.

Alone with his wife, Jondrette began to walk the room again, and took two or three turns in his silence. Then he spent a few minutes in tucking the bottom of the woman's chemise which he wore into the waist of his trousers.

Suddenly he turned toward the woman, folded his arms, and exclaimed:

"And do you want I should tell you one thing? The young lady—"

"Well, what?" said the woman. "The young lady?"

Marius could doubt no longer. It was indeed of her that they were talking. He listened with an intense anxiety. His whole life was concentrated in his ears.

But Jondrette stooped down, and whispered to his wife. Then he straightened up and finished aloud:

"It is she!"

"That girl?" said the wife.

"That girl!" said the husband.

No words could express what there was in the *that girl* of the mother. It was surprise, rage, hatred, anger mingled and combined in a monstrous intonation. The few words that had been spoken, some name, doubtless, which her husband had whispered in her ear, had been enough to rouse this huge drowsy woman and to change her repulsiveness to hideousness.

"Impossible!" she exclaimed, "when I think that my daughters go barefoot, and have not a dress to put on! What! a satin pelisse, a velvet hat, buskins and all! more than 200 francs' worth! one would think she was a lady! no, you are mistaken! why, in the first place she was horrid, this one is not bad! she is really not bad! it can not be she!"

"I tell you it is she. You will see."

At this absolute affirmation the woman raised her big red and blond face and looked at the ceiling with a hideous expression. At that moment she appeared to Marius

still more terrible than her husband. She was a swine with the look of a tigress.

"What!" she resumed, "this horrible beautiful young lady, who looked at my girls with an appearance of pity, can she be that beggar? Oh, I would like to stamp her heart out!"

She sprang off the bed and remained a moment standing, her hair flying, her nostrils distended, her mouth half-open, her fists clinched and drawn back. Then she fell back upon the pallet. The man still walked back and forth, paying no attention to his female.

After a few minutes of silence he approached her and stopped before her, with folded arms, as before.

"And do you want I should tell you one thing?"

"What?" she asked.

He answered in a quick and low voice:

"My fortune is made."

The woman stared at him with that look which means: "Has the man who is talking to me gone crazy?"

He continued:

"Thunder! it is a good long time now that I have been a parishioner of the die-of-hunger-if-you-have-any-fire-and-die-of-cold-if-you-have-any-bread parish! I have had misery enough! my yoke and the yoke of other people! I jest no longer, I find it comic no longer; enough of puns, good God! No more farces, Father Eternal! I want food for my hunger, I want drink for my thirst! to stuff! to sleep! to do nothing! I want to have my turn, I do! Before I burst, I want to be a bit of a millionaire!"

He took a turn about the garret and added:

"Like other people."

"What do you mean?" asked the woman.

He shook his head, winked and lifted his voice like a street-doctor about to make a demonstration.

"What do I mean? Listen!"

"Hist!" muttered the woman, "not so loud! if it means business nobody must hear."

"Pshaw! who is there to hear? our neighbor? I saw him go out just now. Besides, does he hear, the great stupid? and then I tell you that I saw him go out."

Nevertheless, by a sort of instinct, Jondrette lowered his voice, not enough, however, for his words to escape

Marius. A favorable circumstance, and one which enabled Marius to lose nothing of this conversation, was that the fallen snow deadened the sound of the carriages on the boulevard.

Marius heard this:

"Listen attentively. He is caught, the Crœsus! It is all right. It is already done. Everything is arranged. I have seen the men. He will come this evening at six o'clock. To bring his sixty francs, the rascal! Did you see how I got that out, my sixty francs, my landlord, my fourth of February? It is not even a quarter! Was that stupid? He will come then at six o'clock! our neighbor is gone to dinner then. Mother Bourgon is washing dishes in the city. There is nobody in the house. Our neighbor never comes back before eleven o'clock. The girls will stand watch. You shall help us. He will be his own executioner."

"And if he should not be his own executioner?" asked the wife.

Jondrette made a sinister gesture and said:

"We will execute him."

And he burst into a laugh.

It was the first time that Marius had seen him laugh. This laugh was cold and feeble and made him shudder.

Jondrette opened a closet near the chimney, took out an old cap and put it on his head after brushing it with his sleeve.

"Now," said he, "I am going out. I have still some men to see. Some good ones. You will see how it is going to work. I shall be back as soon as possible; it is a great hand to play; look out for the house."

And with his two fists in the two pockets of his trousers he stood a moment in thought, then exclaimed:

"Do you know that it is very lucky, indeed, that he did not recognize me? If he had been the one to recognize me he would not have come back. He would escape us! It was my beard that saved me! my romantic beard! my pretty little romantic beard!"

And he began to laugh again.

He went to the window. The snow was still falling, and blotted out the gray sky.

"What villanous weather!" he said.

Then folding his coat:

"The skin is too large. It is all the same," added he, "he did devilish well to leave it for me, the old scoundrel! Without this I should not have been able to go out, and the whole thing would have been spoiled! But on what do things hang!"

And pulling his cap over his eyes he went out.

Hardly had he had time to take a few steps in the hall when the door opened and his tawny and cunning face again appeared.

"I forgot," said he. "You will have a charcoal fire."

And he threw into his wife's apron the five-franc piece which the "philanthropist" had left him.

"A charcoal fire?" asked the woman.

"Yes."

"How many bushels?"

"Two good ones."

"That will be thirty sous. With the rest I will buy something for dinner."

"The devil, no."

"Why?"

"The piece of 100 sous is not to be spent."

"Why?"

"Because I shall have something to buy."

"What?"

"Something."

"How much will you need?"

"Where is there a tool store near here?"

"Rue Mouffetard."

"Oh! yes, at the corner of some street; I see the shop."

"But tell me how much you will need for what you want to buy?"

"Fifty sous or three francs."

"There won't be much left for dinner."

"Don't bother about eating to-day. There is better business."

"That is enough, my jewel."

At this word from his wife, Jondrette closed the door, and Marius heard his steps recede along the hall and go rapidly down the stairs.

Just then the clock of St. Médard struck one.

XIII

SOLUS CUM SOLO, IN LOCO REMOTO, NON COGITABANTUR
ORARE PATER NOSTER

MARIUS, all dreamer as he was, was, as we have said, of a firm and energetic nature. His habits of solitary meditation, while developing sympathy and compassion in him, had perhaps diminished his liability to become irritated, but left intact the faculty of indignation; he had the benevolence of a Brahmin and the severity of a judge; he would have pitied a toad, but he would have crushed a viper. Now, it was into a viper's hole that he had just been looking; it was a nest of monsters that he had before his eyes.

"I must put my foot on these wretches," said he.

None of the enigmas which he hoped to see unriddled was yet cleared up; on the contrary, all had, perhaps, become still darker; he knew nothing more of the beautiful child of the Luxembourg, or of the man whom he called M. Leblanc, except that Jondrette knew them. Across the dark words which had been uttered he saw distinctly but one thing, that an ambushade was preparing, an ambushade obscure, but terrible; that they were both running a great risk, she probably, her father certainly; that he must foil the hideous combinations of the Jondrettes and break the web of these spiders.

He looked for a moment at the female Jondrette. She had pulled an old sheet-iron furnace out of a corner, and she was fumbling among the old iron.

He got down from the bureau as quietly as he could, taking care to make no noise.

In the midst of his dread at what was in preparation, and the horror with which the Jondrettes had inspired him, he felt a sort of joy at the idea that it would, perhaps, be given to him to render so great a service to her whom he loved.

But what was he to do? warn the persons threatened? where should he find them? He did not know their address. They had reappeared to his eyes for an instant, then they had again plunged into the boundless depths

of Paris. Wait at the door for M. Leblanc at six o'clock in the evening, the time when he would arrive, and warn him of the plot? But Jondrette and his men would see him watching, the place was solitary, they would be stronger than he, they would find means to seize him or get him out of the way, and he whom Marius wished to save would be lost. One o'clock had just struck, the ambushade was to be carried out at six. Marius had five hours before him.

There was but one thing to be done.

He put on his presentable coat, tied a cravat about his neck, took his hat, and went out, without making any more noise than if he had been walking barefooted upon moss.

Besides, the Jondrette woman was still fumbling over her old iron.

Once out of the house, he went to the Rue du Petit Banquier.

He was about midway of that street, near a very low wall, which he could have stepped over in some places and which bordered a broad field; he was walking slowly, absorbed in his thoughts as he was, and the snow deadened his steps; all at once he heard voices talking very near him. He turned his head, the street was empty, there was nobody in it, it was broad daylight and yet he heard voices distinctly.

It occurred to him to look over this wall.

There were, in fact, two men there, with their backs to the wall, seated in the snow and talking in a low tone.

These two forms were unknown to him; one was a bearded man in a blouse and the other a long-haired man in tatters. The bearded man had on a Greek cap, the other was bareheaded and there was snow in his hair.

By bending his head over above them Marius could hear.

The long-haired one jogged the other with his elbow and said:

"With Patron Minette it can't fail."

"Do you think so?" said the bearded one. And the long-haired one replied:

"It will be a *faiot* of 500 *balles* for each of us and the worst that can happen—five years, six years, ten years at most!"

The other answered hesitatingly, shivering under his Greek cap:

"Yes, it is a real thing. We can't go against such things."

"I tell you that the affair can't fail," replied the long-haired one. "Father What's-his-name's *maringotte* will be harnessed."

Then they began to talk about a melodrama which they had seen the evening before at La Gaité.

Marius went on his way.

It seemed to him that the obscure words of these men, so strangely hidden behind that wall, and crouching down in the snow, were not, perhaps, without some connection with Jondrette's terrible projects. That must be *the affair*.

He went toward the Faubourg St. Marceau and asked at the first shop in his way where he could find a commissary of police.

No. 14 Rue de Pontoise was pointed out to him.

Marius went thither.

Passing a baker's shop, he bought a two-sou loaf and ate it, foreseeing that he would have no dinner.

On his way he rendered to Providence its due. He thought that if he had not given his five francs to the Jondrette girl in the morning he would have followed M. Leblanc's fiacre, and, consequently, known nothing of this, so that there would have been no obstacle to the ambushade of the Jondrettes, and M. Leblanc would have been lost, and, doubtless, his daughter with him.

XIV

IN WHICH A POLICE OFFICER GIVES A LAWYER TWO
FISTICUFFS

ON reaching No. 14 Rue de Pontoise he went upstairs and asked for the commissary of police.

"The commissary of police is not in," said one of the office boys; "but there is an inspector who answers for him. Would you like to speak to him? Is it urgent?"

"Yes," said Marius.

The office boy introduced him into the commissary's

private room. A man of tall stature was standing there behind a railing, in front of a stove, and holding up with both hands the flaps of a huge overcoat with three capes. He had a square face, a thin and firm mouth, very fierce, bushy, grayish whiskers, and an eye that would turn your pockets inside out. You might have said of this eye, not that it penetrated, but that it ransacked.

This man's appearance was not much less ferocious or formidable than Jondrette's; it is sometimes no less startling to meet the dog than the wolf.

"What do you wish?" said he to Marius, without adding *monsieur*.

"The commissary of police."

"He is absent. I answer for him."

"It is a very secret affair."

"Speak, then."

"And very urgent."

"Then speak quickly."

This man, calm and abrupt, was at the same time alarming and reassuring. He inspired fear and confidence. Marius related his adventure. That a person whom he only knew by sight was to be drawn into an ambuscade that very evening; that, occupying the room next the place, he, Marius Pontmercy, attorney, had heard the whole plot through the partition; that the scoundrel who had contrived the plot was named Jondrette; that he had accomplices, probably prowlers of the *barrières*, among others a certain Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille; that Jondrette's daughters would stand watch; that there was no means of warning the threatened man, as not even his name was known; and, finally, that all this was to be done at six o'clock that evening, at the most desolate spot on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, in the house numbered 50-52.

At that number the inspector raised his head, and said, coolly:

"It is, then, in the room at the end of the hall?"

"Exactly," said Marius; and he added: "Do you know that house?"

The inspector remained silent a moment, then answered, warming the heel of his boot at the door of the stove:

"It seems so."

He continued between his teeth, speaking less to Marius than to his cravat:

"There ought to be a dash of Patron Minette in this."

That word struck Marius.

"Patron Minette," said he. "Indeed, I heard that word pronounced."

And he related to the inspector the dialogue between the long-haired man and the bearded man in the snow behind the wall on the Rue du Petit Banquier.

The inspector muttered:

"The long-haired one must be Brujon, and the bearded one must be Demi Liard, alias Deux-Millards."

He had dropped his eyes again, and was considering.

"As to the Father What's-his-name, I have a suspicion of who he is. There, I have burned my coat. They always make too much fire in these cursed stoves. No. 50-52. Old Gorbeau property."

Then he looked at Marius: "You have seen only this bearded man and this long-haired man?"

"And Panchaud."

"You did not see a sort of little devilish rat prowling about there?"

"No."

"Nor a great big clumsy heap, like the elephant in the Jardin des Plantes?"

"No."

"Nor a villain who has the appearance of an old red cue?"

"No."

"As to the fourth, nobody sees him, not even his helpers, clerks and agents. It is not very surprising that you did not see him."

"No. What are all these beings?" inquired Marius. The inspector answered:

"And then it is not their hour."

He relapsed into silence, then resumed:

"No. 50-52. I know the shanty. Impossible to hide ourselves in the interior without the artists perceiving us, then they would leave and break up the play. They are so modest! the public annoys them. None of that, none of that. I want to hear them sing and make them dance."

This monologue finished, he turned toward Marius and asked him, looking steadily at him:

"Will you be afraid?"

"Of what?" said Marius.

"Of these men?"

"No more than of you!" replied Marius rudely, who began to notice that this police spy had not yet called him monsieur.

The inspector looked at Marius still more steadily and continued with a sententious solemnity:

"You speak now like a brave man and an honest man. Courage does not fear crime, and honesty does not fear authority."

Marius interrupted him:

"That is well enough; but what are you going to do?"

The inspector merely answered:

"The lodgers in that house have latchkeys to get in with at night. You must have one?"

"Yes," said Marius.

"Have you it with you?"

"Yes."

"Give it to me," said the inspector.

Marius took his key from his waistcoat, handed it to the inspector, and added:

"If you trust me, you will come in force."

The inspector threw a glance upon Marius such as Voltaire would have thrown upon a provincial academician who had proposed a rhyme to him; with a single movement he plunged both his hands, which were enormous, into the two immense pockets of his overcoat, and took out two small steel pistols, of the kind called fisticuffs. He presented them to Marius, saying hastily and abruptly:

"Take these. Go back home. Hide yourself in your room, let them think you have gone out. They are loaded. Each with two balls. You will watch; there is a hole in the wall, as you have told me. The men will come. Let them go on a little. When you deem the affair at a point, and when it is time to stop it, you will fire off a pistol. Not too soon. The rest is my affair. A pistol-shot in the air, into the ceiling, no matter where. Above all, not too soon. Wait till the consummation is commenced; you are a lawyer, you know what that is."

Marius took the pistols and put them in the side pocket of his coat.

"They make a bunch that way, they show," said the inspector. "Put them in your fobs rather."

Marius hid the pistols in his fobs.

"Now," pursued the inspector, "there is not a minute to be lost by anybody. What time is it? Half-past two. It is at seven."

"Six o'clock," said Marius.

"I have time enough," continued the inspector, "but I have only enough. Forget nothing of what I have told you. Bang. A pistol-shot."

"Be assured," answered Marius.

And as Marius placed his hand on the latch of the door to go out the inspector called to him: "By the way, if you need me between now and then come or send here. You will ask for Inspector Javert."

XV

JONDRETTE MAKES HIS PURCHASE

A FEW moments afterward, toward three o'clock, Courfeyrac happened to pass along the Rue Mouffetard in company with Bossuet. The snow was falling still faster and filled the air. Bossuet was just saying to Courfeyrac: "To see all these snowflakes falling one would say that there is a swarm of white butterflies in the sky." All at once Bossuet perceived Marius, who was going up the street toward the barrière with a very peculiar appearance.

"Hold on, Marius," said Bossuet.

"I saw him," said Courfeyrac. "Don't speak to him."

"Why?"

"He is busy."

"At what?"

"Don't you see how he looks?"

"What look?"

"He has the appearance of a man who is following somebody."

"That is true," said Bossuet.

"And see what eyes he is making!" added Courfeyrac.

"But who the devil is he following?"

"Some deary-sweetly-flowery-bonnet! He is in love."

"But," observed Bossuet, "I do not see any deary, nor any sweetly, nor any flowery bonnet in the street. There is no woman."

Courfeyrac looked and exclaimed:

"He is following a man!"

In fact, a man with a cap on his head and whose gray beard they distinguished, although only his back could be seen, was walking some twenty paces in advance of Marius.

This man was dressed in a new overcoat, which was too large for him, and a horrid pair of pantaloons in tatters and black with mud.

Bossuet burst out laughing.

"Who is that man?"

"He?" replied Courfeyrac, "he is a poet. Poets are fond of wearing the trousers of a rabbit-skin pedler and the coat of a peer of France."

"Let us see where Marius is going," said Bossuet, "let us see where this man is going, let us follow them, eh?"

"Bossuet!" exclaimed Courfeyrac, "Eagle of Meaux! you are a prodigious fool. Follow a man who is following a man?"

They went on their way.

Marius had, in fact, seen Jondrette passing along the Rue Mouffetard, and was watching him.

Jondrette went straight on without suspecting that there was now an eye fixed upon him.

He left the Rue Mouffetard and Marius saw him go into one of the most wretched places on the Rue Gracieuse; he stayed there about a quarter of an hour and then returned to the Rue Mouffetard. He stopped at a hardware store which there was in those times at the corner of the Rue Pierre Lombard and, a few minutes afterward, Marius saw him come out of the shop holding in his hand a large cold chisel with a white wooden handle which he concealed under his coat. At the upper end of the Rue de Petit Gentilly he turned to the left and walked rapidly to the Rue du Petit Banquier. Night was falling; the snow, which had ceased to fall for a moment, was beginning again; Marius hid just at the corner of the Rue du Petit

Banquier, which was solitary, as usual, and did not follow Jondrette further. It was fortunate that he did, for, on reaching the low wall where Marius had heard the long-haired man and the bearded man talking, Jondrette turned around, made sure that no one was following him or saw him, then stepped over the wall and disappeared.

The grounds which this wall bounded communicated with the rear court of an old livery-stable keeper of bad repute who had failed, but who had still a few old vehicles under his sheds.

Marius thought it best to take advantage of Jondrette's absence to get home; besides it was getting late; every evening, Ma'am Bougon, on going out to wash her dishes in the city, was in the habit of closing the house door, which was always locked at dusk; Marius had given his key to the inspector of police; it was important, therefore, that he should make haste.

Evening had come; night had almost closed in; there was now but one spot in the horizon or the whole sky which was lighted by the sun; that was the moon.

She was rising red behind the low dome of La Salpêtrière.

Marius returned to No. 50-52 with rapid strides. The door was still open when he arrived. He ascended the stairs on tiptoe and glided along the wall of the hall as far as his room. This hall, it will be remembered, was lined on both sides by garrets, which were all at that time empty and to let. Ma'am Bougon usually left the doors open. As he passed by one of these doors Marius thought he perceived in the unoccupied cell four motionless heads, which were made dimly visible by a remnant of daylight falling through the little window. Marius, not wishing to be seen, did not endeavor to see. He succeeded in getting to his room without being perceived and without any noise. It was time. A moment afterward he heard Ma'am Bougon going out and closing the door of the house.

XVI

IN WHICH WILL BE FOUND THE SONG TO AN ENGLISH
AIR IN FASHION IN 1832

MARIUS sat down on his bed. It might have been 5:30 o'clock. A half-hour only separated him from what was to come. He heard his arteries beat as one hears the ticking of a watch in the dark. He thought of this double march that was going on at that moment in the darkness, crime advancing on the one hand, justice coming on the other. He was not afraid, but he could not think without a sort of shudder of the things which were so soon to take place. To him, as to all those whom some surprising adventure has suddenly befallen, this whole day seemed but a dream; and, to assure himself that he was not the prey of a nightmare, he had to feel the chill of the two steel pistols in his fob-pockets.

It was not now snowing; the moon, growing brighter and brighter, was getting clear of the haze, and its light, mingled with the white reflection from the fallen snow, gave the room a twilight appearance.

There was a light in the Jondrette den. Marius saw the hole in the partition shine with a red gleam, which appeared to him bloody.

He was sure that this gleam could hardly be produced by a candle. However, there was no movement in their room, nobody was stirring there, nobody spoke, not a breath, the stillness was icy and deep, and save for that light he could have believed that he was beside a sepulchre.

Marius took his boots off softly and pushed them under his bed.

Some minutes passed. Marius heard the lower door turn on its hinges; a heavy and rapid step ascended the stairs and passed along the corridor; the latch of the garret was noisily lifted; Jondrette came in.

Several voices were heard immediately. The whole family was in the garret. Only they kept silence in the absence of the master, like the cubs in the absence of the wolf.

"It is me," said he.

"Good-evening, *pèremuche*," squeaked the daughters.

"Well?" said the mother.

"All goes to a charm," answered Jondrette, "but my feet are as cold as a dog's. Good, that is right, you are dressed up. You must be able to inspire confidence."

"All ready to go out."

"You will forget nothing of what I told you! you will do the whole of it?"

"Rest assured about that."

"Because—," said Jondrette. And he did not finish his sentence.

Marius heard him put something heavy on the table, probably the chisel which he had bought.

"Ah, ha!" said Jondrette, "have you been eating here?"

"Yes," said the mother, "I have had three big potatoes and some salt; I took advantage of the fire to cook them."

"Well," replied Jondrette, "to-morrow I will take you to dine with me. There will be a duck and the accompaniments. You shall dine like Charles X; everything is going well!"

Then he added, lowering his voice:

"The mouse-trap is open. The cats are ready."

He lowered his voice still more, and said:

"Put that into the fire."

Marius heard a sound of charcoal as if somebody was striking it with pincers or some iron tool, and Jondrette continued:

"Have you greased the hinges of the door, so that they shall not make any noise?"

"Yes," answered the mother.

"What time is it?"

"Six o'clock, almost the half has just struck on St. Médard."

"The devil!" said Jondrette, "the girls must go and stand watch. Come here, you children, and listen to me."

There was a whispering.

Jondrette's voice rose again:

"Has Bourgon gone out?"

"Yes," said the mother.

"Are you sure that there is nobody at home in our neighbor's room?"

"He has not been back to-day, and you know that it is his dinner-time."

"You are sure?"

"Sure."

"It is all the same," replied Jondrette; "there is no harm in going to see whether he is at home. Daughter, take the candle and go."

Marius dropped on his hands and knees, and crept noiselessly under the bed.

Hardly had he concealed himself when he perceived a light through the cracks of his door.

"P'pa," cried a voice, "he has gone out."

He recognized the voice of the elder girl.

"Have you gone in?" asked the father.

"No," answered the girl, "but as his key is in his door he has gone out."

The father cried:

"Go in just the same."

The door opened, and Marius saw the tall girl come in with a candle. She had the same appearance as in the morning, except that she was still more horrible in this light.

She walked straight toward the bed. Marius had a moment of inexpressible anxiety, but there was a mirror nailed on the wall near the bed; it was to that she was going. She stretched up on tiptoe and looked at herself in it. A sound of old iron rattling was heard in the next room.

She smoothed her hair with the palm of her hand, and smiled at the mirror, singing the while in her broken, sepulchral voice:

*"Nos amours ont duré tout une semaine,
Mais que du bonheur les instants sont courts!
S'adorer huit jours, c'était bien la deîne!
Le temps des amours devrait durer toujours!
Devrait durer toujours! devrait durer toujours!"*

Meanwhile Marius was trembling. It seemed impossible to him that she should not hear his breathing.

She went to the window and looked out, speaking aloud in her half-crazy way.

"How ugly Paris is when he puts a white shirt on?" said she.

She returned to the mirror and renewed her grimaces, taking alternately front and three-quarter views of herself.

"Well," cried her father, "what are you doing now?"

"I am looking under the bed and the furniture," answered she, continuing to arrange her hair; "there is nobody here."

"Booby!" howled the father. "Here immediately, and let us lose no time."

"I am coming! I am coming!" said she. "One has no time for anything in their shanty."

She hummed:

*"Vous me quittez pour aller à la gloire.
Mon triste cœur suivra partout vos pas."*

She cast a last glance at the mirror and went out, shutting the door after her.

A moment afterward Marius heard the sound of the bare feet of the two young girls in the passage and the voice of Jondrette crying to them:

"Pay attention, now! one toward the barrière, the other at the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier. Don't lose sight of the house door a minute, and if you see the least thing, here immediately! tumble along! You have a key to come in with."

The elder daughter muttered:

"To stand sentry barefoot in the snow!"

"To-morrow you shall have boots of beetle-color silk!" said the father.

They went down the stairs and, a few seconds afterward, the sound of the lower door shutting announced that they had gone out.

There were now in the house only Marius and the Jondrettes, and probably, also, the mysterious beings of whom Marius had caught a glimpse in the twilight behind the door of the untenanted garret.

XVII

USE OF MARIUS' FIVE-FRANC PIECE

MARIUS judged that the time had come to resume his place at his observatory. In a twinkling and with the agility of his age he was at the hole in the partition.

He looked in.

The interior of the Jondrette apartment presented a singular appearance, and Marius found the explanation of the strange light which he had noticed. A candle was burning in a verdigrised candlestick, but it was not that which really lighted the room. The entire den was, as it were, illuminated by the reflection of a large sheet-iron furnace in the fireplace, which was filled with lighted charcoal. The fire which the female Jondrette had made ready in the daytime. The charcoal was burning and the furnace was red-hot; a blue flame danced over it and helped to show the form of the chisel bought by Jondrette in the Rue Pierre Lombard, which was growing ruddy among the coals. In a corner near the door, and arranged as if for anticipated use, were two heaps which appeared to be, one, a heap of old iron, the other a heap of ropes. All this would have made one who had known nothing of what was going forward waver between a very sinister idea and a very simple idea. The room thus lighted up seemed rather a smithy than a mouth of hell; but Jondrette, in that glare, had rather the appearance of a demon than that of a blacksmith.

The heat of the glowing coals was such that the candle upon the table melted on the side toward the furnace and was burning fastest on that side. An old copper dark-lantern, worthy of Diogenes turned Cartouche, stood upon the mantel.

The furnace which was set into the fireplace beside the almost extinguished embers sent its smoke into the flue of the chimney and exhaled no odor.

The moon, shining through the four panes of the window, threw its whiteness into the ruddy and flaming garget; and to Marius' poetic mind, a dreamer even in the moment of action, it was like a thought from heaven mingled with the shapeless nightmares of earth.

A breath of air, coming through the broken square, helped to dissipate the charcoal odor and to conceal the furnace.

The Jondrette lair was, if the reader remembers what we have said of the Gorbeau house, admirably chosen for the theatre of a deed of darkness and violence, and for the concealment of a crime. It was the most retired room of the most isolated house of the most solitary boulevard in Paris. If ambuscade had not existed it would have been invented there.

The whole depth of a house and a multitude of untenanted rooms separated this hole from the boulevard, and its only window opened upon waste fields inclosed with walls and palisade fences.

Jondrette had lighted his pipe, sat down on the dismantled chair, and was smoking. His wife was speaking to him in a low tone.

If Marius had been Courfeyrac, that is to say, one of those men who laugh at every opportunity in life, he would have burst with laughter when his eye fell upon this woman. She had on a black hat with plumes somewhat similar to the hats of the heralds-at-arms at the consecration of Charles X, an immense tartan shawl over her knit skirt, and the man's shoes which her daughter had disdained in the morning. It was this toilet which had drawn from Jondrette the exclamation: "Good! you are dressed up! you have done well! You must be able to inspire confidence!"

As to Jondrette, he had not taken off the new surtout, too large for him, which M. Leblanc had given him, and his costume continued to offer that contrast between the coat and pantaloons which constituted in Courfeyrac's eyes the ideal of a poet.

Suddenly Jondrette raised his voice: "By the way, now, I think of it. In such weather as this he will come in a fiacre. Light the lantern, take it, and go down. You will stay there behind the lower door. The moment you hear the carriage stop, you will open immediately, he will come up, you will light him up the stairs and above the hall, and when he comes in here, you will go down again immediately, pay the driver and send the fiacre away."

"And the money?" asked the woman.

Jondrette fumbled in his trousers and handed her five francs.

"What is that?" she exclaimed.

Jondrette answered with dignity: "It is the monarch which our neighbor gave this morning."

And he added: "Do you know? we must have two chairs here."

"What for?"

"To sit in."

Marius felt a shiver run down his back on hearing the woman make this quiet reply: "Pardieu! I will get our neighbor's."

And with rapid movement she opened the door of the den and went out into the hall.

Marius, physically, had not the time to get down from the bureau and go and hide himself under the bed.

"Take the candle," cried Jondrette.

"No," said she, "that would bother me; I have two chairs to bring. It is moonlight."

Marius heard the heavy hand of Mother Jondrette groping after his key in the dark. The door opened. He stood nailed to his place by apprehension and stupor.

The woman came in.

The gable window let in a ray of moonlight between two great sheets of shadow. One of these sheets of shadow entirely covered the wall against which Marius was leaning so as to conceal him.

The Mother Jondrette raised her eyes, did not see Marius, took the two chairs, the only chairs which Marius had, and went out, slamming the door noisily behind her.

She went back into the den.

"Here are the two chairs."

"And here is the lantern," said the husband. "Go down quick."

She hastily obeyed and Jondrette was left alone.

He arranged the two chairs on the two sides of the table, turned the chisel over in the fire, put an old screen in front of the fireplace, which concealed the furnace, then went to the corner where the heap of ropes was and stooped down as if to examine something. Marius then perceived that what he had taken for a shapeless heap was

a rope ladder, very well made, with wooden rounds and two large hooks to hang it by.

This ladder and a few big tools, actual masses of iron, which were thrown upon the pile of old iron heaped up behind the door, were not in the Jondrette den in the morning, and had evidently been brought there in the afternoon during Marius' absence.

"Those are smith's tools," thought Marius.

Had Marius been a little better informed in this line he would have recognized in what he took for smith's tools certain instruments capable of picking a lock or forcing a door, and others capable of cutting or hacking—the two families of sinister tools which thieves call *cadets* and *fauchants*.

The fireplace and the table with the two chairs were exactly opposite Marius. The furnace was hidden; the room was now lighted only by the candle; the least thing upon the table or the mantle made a great shadow. A broken water-pitcher masked the half of one wall. There was in the room a calm which was inexpressibly hideous and threatening. The approach of some appalling thing could be felt.

Jondrette had let his pipe go out—a sure sign that he was intensely absorbed—and had come back and sat down. The candle made the savage ends and corners of his face stand out prominently. There were contractions of his brows and abrupt openings of his right hand as if he were replying to the last counsels of a dark interior monologue. In one of these obscure replies which he was making to himself he drew the table drawer out quickly toward him, took out a long carving-knife which was hidden there and tried its edge on his nail. This done, he put the knife back into the drawer and shut it.

Marius, for his part, grasped the pistol which was in his right fob-pocket, took it out and cocked it.

The pistol in cocking gave a little clear, sharp sound.

Jondrette started and half rose from his chair.

"Who is there?" cried he.

Marius held his breath; Jondrette listened a moment, then began to laugh, saying: "What a fool I am! It is the partition cracking."

Marius kept the pistol in his hand.

XVIII

MARIUS' TWO CHAIRS FACE EACH OTHER

JUST then the distant and melancholy vibration of a bell shook the windows. Six o'clock struck on St. Médard.

Jondrette marked each stroke with a nod of his head. At the sixth stroke he snuffed the candle with his fingers.

Then he began to walk about the room, listened in the hall, walked, listened again: "Provided he comes," muttered he; then he returned to his chair.

He had hardly sat down when the door opened.

The Mother Jondrette had opened it and stood in the hall making a horrible, amiable grimace, which was lighted up from beneath by one of the holes of the dark-lantern.

"Walk in," said she.

"Walk in, my benefactor," repeated Jondrette, rising precipitately.

M. Leblanc appeared.

He had an air of serenity which made him singularly venerable.

He laid four louis upon the table.

"M. Fabantou," said he, "that is for your rent and your pressing wants. We will see about the rest."

"God reward you, my generous benefactor!" said Jondrette, and, rapidly approaching his wife: "Send away the fiacre."

She slipped away, while her husband was lavishing bows and offering a chair to M. Leblanc. A moment afterward she came back and whispered in his ear: "It is done."

The snow, which had been falling ever since morning, was so deep that they had not heard the fiacre arrive and did not hear it go away.

Meanwhile M. Leblanc had taken a seat.

Jondrette had taken possession of the other chair opposite M. Leblanc.

Now, to form an idea of the scene which follows, let the reader call to mind the chilly night, the solitudes of La Salpêtrière covered with snow and white in the moonlight like immense shrouds, the flickering light of the street-

lamps here and there reddening these tragic boulevards and the long rows of black elms, not a passer, perhaps, within a mile around, the Gorbeau tenement at its deepest degree of silence, horror and night; in that tenement, in the midst of these solitudes, in the midst of this darkness, the vast Jondrette garret lighted by a candle, and in this den two men seated at a table, M. Leblanc tranquil, Jondrette smiling and terrible, his wife, the wolf dam, in a corner, and behind the partition Marius, invisible, alert, losing no word, losing no movement, his eye on the watch, his pistol in his grasp.

Marius, moreover, was experiencing nothing but an emotion of horror, no fear. He clasped the butt of the pistol and felt reassured. "I shall stop this wretch when I please," thought he.

He felt that the police was somewhere near by in ambush awaiting the signal agreed upon and all ready to stretch out its arm.

He hoped, moreover, that from this terrible meeting between Jondrette and M. Leblanc some light would be thrown upon all that he was interested to know.

XIX

THE DISTRACTIONS OF DARK CORNERS

NO sooner was M. Leblanc seated than he turned his eyes toward the empty pallets.

"How does the poor little injured girl do?" he inquired.

"Badly," answered Jondrette, with a doleful yet grateful smile, "very badly, my worthy monsieur. Her elder sister has taken her to the bourbe to have her arm dressed. You will see them—they will be back directly."

"Mme. Fabantou appears to be much better?" resumed M. Leblanc, casting his eyes upon the grotesque accoutrements of the female Jondrette, who, standing between him and the door, as if she were already guarding the exit, was looking at him in a threatening and almost a defiant posture.

"She is dying," said Jondrette. "But you see, monsieur! she has so much courage, that woman! She is not a woman, she is an ox."

The woman, touched by the compliment, retorted with a smirk of a flattered monster: "You are always too kind to me, M. Jondrette."

"Jondrette!" said M. Leblanc, "I thought that your name was Fabantou?"

"Fabantou or Jondrette!" replied the husband hastily. "Sobriquet as an artist!"

And, directing a shrug of his shoulders toward his wife, which M. Leblanc did not see, he continued with an emphatic and caressing tone of voice:

"Ah! how well we have always got along together, this poor dear and I! What would be left to us if it were not for that? We are so unfortunate, my respected monsieur! We have arms, no labor! We have courage, no work! I do not know how the government arranges it, but, upon my word of honor, I am no Jacobin, monsieur, I am no brawler, I wish them no harm, but if I were the ministers, upon my most sacred word, it would go differently. Now, for example, I wanted to have my girls learn the trade of making card boxes. You will say: What! a trade? Yes! a trade, a simple trade! a living! What a fall, my benefactor! What a degradation, when one has been what we were! Alas! we have nothing left from our days of prosperity! Nothing but one single thing, a painting, to which I cling, but yet which I shall have to part with, for we must live! item, we must live!"

While Jondrette was talking, with an apparent disorder which detracted nothing from the crafty and cunning expression of his physiognomy, Marius raised his eyes, and perceived at the back of the room somebody whom he had not before seen. A man had come in so noiselessly that nobody had heard the door turn on its hinges. This man had a knit woolen waistcoat of violet color, old, worn-out, stained, cut, and showing gaps at all its folds, full trousers of cotton velvet, socks on his feet, no shirt, his neck bare, his arms bare and tattooed, and his face stained black. He sat down in silence and with folded arms on the nearest bed, and as he kept behind the woman he was distinguished only with difficulty.

That kind of magnetic instinct which warns the eye made M. Leblanc turn almost at the same time with Ma-

rius. He could not help a movement of surprise, which did not escape Jondrette:

"Ah! I see!" exclaimed Jondrette, buttoning up his coat with a complacent air, "you are looking at your overcoat. It's a fit! my faith, it's a fit!"

"Who is that man?" said M. Leblanc.

"That man?" said Jondrette, "that is a neighbor. Pay no attention to him."

The neighbor had a singular appearance. However, factories of chemical products abound in the Faubourg St. Marceau. Many machinists might have their faces blacked. The whole person of M. Leblanc, moreover, breathed a candid and intrepid confidence. He resumed:

"Pardon me; what were you saying to me, M. Fabantou?"

"I was telling you, monsieur and dear patron," replied Jondrette, leaning his elbows on the table, and gazing at M. Leblanc with fixed and tender eyes, similar to the eyes of a boa-constrictor, "I was telling you that I had a picture to sell."

A slight noise was made at the door. A second man entered, and sat down on the bed behind the female Jondrette. He had his arms bare, like the first, and a mask of ink or of soot.

Although this man had, literally, slipped into the room, he could not prevent M. Leblanc from perceiving him.

"Do not mind them," said Jondrette. "They are people of the house. I was telling you, then, that I have a valuable painting left. Here, monsieur, look."

He got up, went to the wall, at the foot of which stood the panel of which we have spoken, and turned it round, still leaving it resting against the wall. It was something, in fact, that resembled a picture, and which the candle scarcely revealed. Marius could make nothing out of it, Jondrette being between him and the picture; he merely caught a glimpse of a coarse daub with a sort of principal personage, colored in the crude and glaring style of strolling panoramas and paintings upon screens.

"What is that?" asked M. Leblanc.

Jondrette exclaimed:

"A painting by a master; a picture of great price, my benefactor! I cling to it as to my two daughters, it

calls up memories to me! but I have told you, and I can not unsay it, I am so unfortunate that I would part with it."

Whether by chance, or whether there was some beginning of distrust, while examining the picture M. Leblanc glanced toward the back of the room. There were now four men there, three seated on the bed, one standing near the door-casing; all four bare-armed, motionless, and with blackened faces. One of those who were on the bed was leaning against the wall with his eyes closed, and one would have said he was asleep. This one was old; his white hair over his black face was horrible. The two others appeared young; one was bearded, the other had long hair. None of them had shoes on; those who did not have socks were barefooted.

Jondrette noticed that M. Leblanc's eye was fixed upon these men.

"They are friends. They live near by," said he. "They are dark because they work in charcoal. They are chimney doctors. Do not occupy your mind with them, my benefactor, but buy my picture. Take pity on my misery. I shall not sell it to you at a high price. How much do you estimate it is worth?"

"But," said M. Leblanc, looking Jondrette full in the face, and like a man who puts himself on his guard, "this is some tavern sign; it is worth about three francs."

Jondrette answered calmly: "Have you your pocket-book here? I will be satisfied with 1,000 crowns."

M. Leblanc rose to his feet, placed his back to the wall, and ran his eye rapidly over the room. He had Jondrette at his left, on the side toward the window, and his wife and the four men at his right, on the side toward the door. The four men did not stir, and had not even the appearance of seeing him; Jondrette had begun again to talk in a plaintive key, with his eye so wild and his tones so mournful, that M. Leblanc might have thought that he had before his eyes nothing more nor less than a man gone crazy from misery.

"If you do not buy my picture, dear benefactor," said Jondrette, "I am without resources; I have only to throw myself into the river. When I think that I wanted to have my two girls learn to work on card-board; demi-fine

card-board work for gift-boxes! Well, they must have a table with a board at the bottom so that the glasses shall not fall on the ground; they must have a furnace made on purpose, a pot with three compartments for the different degrees of strength which the paste must have, according to whether it is used for wood, for paper, or for cloth; a knife to cut the pasteboard, a gauge to adjust it, a hammer for the stamps, pincers—the devil! how do I know what else?—and all this to earn four sous a day and work fourteen hours! and every box passes through the girl's hands thirteen times! and wetting the paper! and to stain nothing! and to keep the paste warm! The devil! I tell you! Four sous a day! How do you think one can live?"

While speaking Jondrette did not look at M. Leblanc, who was watching him. M. Leblanc's eye was fixed upon Jondrette and Jondrette's eye upon the door. Marius' breathless attention went from one to the other. M. Leblanc appeared to ask himself: "Is this an idiot?" Jondrette repeated two or three times, with all sorts of varied inflections, in the drawling and begging style: "I can only throw myself into the river. I went down three steps for that the other day by the side of the bridge of Austerlitz!"

Suddenly his dull eye lighted up with a hideous glare; this little man straightened up and became horrifying. He took a step toward M. Leblanc and cried to him, in a voice of thunder: "But all that is not the question! Do you know me?"

XX

THE AMBUSCADE

THE door of the garret had been suddenly flung open, disclosing three men in blue blouses with black paper masks. The first was spare and had a long iron-bound cudgel; the second, who was a sort of colossus, held by the middle of the handle, with the axe down, a butcher's pole-axe. The third, a broad-shouldered man, not so thin as the first nor so heavy as the second, held in his clinched fist an enormous key stolen from some prison door.

It appeared that it was the arrival of these men for

which Jondrette was waiting. A rapid dialogue commenced between him and the man with the cudgel—the spare man.

“Is everything ready?” said Jondrette.

“Yes,” answered the spare man.

“Where is Montparnasse, then?”

“The young primate stopped to chat with your daughter.”

“Which one?”

“The elder.”

“Is there a fiacre below?”

“Yes.”

“The *maringotte* is ready?”

“Ready.”

“With two good horses?”

“Excellent.”

“It is waiting where I said it should wait?”

“Yes.”

“Good!” said Jondrette.

M. Leblanc was very pale. He looked over everything in the room about him like a man who understands into what he has fallen, and his head, directed in turn toward all the heads which surrounded him, moved on his neck with an attentive and astonished slowness, but there was nothing in his manner which resembled fear. He had made an extemporized intrenchment of the table; and this man who, the moment before, had the appearance only of a good old man, had suddenly become a sort of athlete, and placed his powerful fist upon the back of his chair with a surprising and formidable gesture.

This old man, so firm and so brave before so great a peril, seemed to be one of those natures who are courageous as they are good, simply and naturally. The father of a woman that we love is never a stranger to us. Marius felt proud of this unknown man.

Three of the men, of whom Jondrette had said, “They are chimney doctors,” had taken from the heap of old iron—one a large pair of shears, another a steelyard bar, the third a hammer, and placed themselves before the door without saying a word. The old man was still on the bed, and had merely opened his eyes. The woman Jondrette was sitting beside him.

Marius thought that in a few seconds more the time would come to interfere, and he raised his right hand toward the ceiling, in the direction of the hall, ready to let off his pistol-shot.

Jondrette, after his colloquy with the man who had the cudgel, turned again toward M. Leblanc and repeated his question, accompanying it with that low, smothered and terrible laugh of his:

"You do not recognize me, then?"

M. Leblanc looked him in the face and answered:

"No."

Then Jondrette came up to the table. He leaned forward over the candle, folding his arms, and pushing his angular and ferocious jaws up toward the calm face of M. Leblanc as nearly as he could without forcing him to draw back, and in that posture, like a wild beast just about to bite, he cried:

"My name is not Fabantou, my name is not Jondrette, my name is Thenardier! I am the innkeeper of Montfermeil! Do you understand me? Thenardier! Now do you know me?"

An imperceptible flush passed over M. Leblanc's forehead, and he answered, without tremor or elevation of voice, and with his usual placidness:

"No more than before."

Marius did not hear this answer. Could anybody have seen him at that moment in that darkness, he would have seen that he was haggard, astounded, and thunderstruck. When Jondrette had said, "My name is Thenardier," Marius had trembled in every limb and supported himself against the wall as if he had felt the chill of a sword-blade through his heart. Then his right arm, which was just ready to fire the signal shot, dropped slowly down, and at the moment that Jondrette had repeated, "Do you understand me, Thenardier?" Marius' nerveless fingers had almost dropped the pistol. Jondrette, in unveiling who he was, had not moved M. Leblanc, but he had completely unnerved Marius. That name of Thenardier, which M. Leblanc did not seem to know, Marius knew. Remember what that name was to him! That name he had worn on his heart, written in his father's will! He carried it in the innermost place of his thoughts, in the holiest spot of his

memory, in that sacred command: "A man named Thenardier saved my life. If my son should meet him, he will do him all the good he can." That name, we remember, was one of the devotions of his soul, he mingled it with the name of his father in his worship. What! Here was Thenardier. Here was that Thenardier; here was that innkeeper of Montfermeil for whom he had so long and so vainly sought! He had found him at last, and how? This savior of his father was a bandit! This man, to whom he—Marius—burned to devote himself was a monster! This deliverer of Colonel Pontmercy was in the actual commission of crime, the shape of which Marius did not yet see very distinctly, but which looked like an assassination! And upon whom? Great God! What a fatality! What a bitter mockery of fate! His father, from the depths of his coffin, commanded him to do all the good he could to Thenardier; for four years Marius had had no other thought than to acquit this debt of his father, and the moment that he was about to cause a brigand to be seized by justice in the midst of a crime destiny called to him: "That is Thenardier!" His father's life, saved in a storm of grape upon the heroic field of Waterloo, he was at last about to reward this man for, and to reward him with the scaffold! He had resolved, if ever he found this Thenardier, to accost him in no other wise than by throwing himself at his feet, and now he found him, indeed, but to deliver him to the executioner! His father said to him: "Aid Thenardier!" and he was answering that adored and holy voice by crushing Thenardier! presenting as a spectacle to his father in his tomb the man who had snatched him from death at the peril of his life, executed in the Place St. Jacques by the act of his son, this Marius to whom he had bequeathed this man! And what a mockery to have worn so long upon his breast the last wishes of his father, written by his hand, only to act so frightfully contrary to them! but on the other hand to see this ambushade and not to prevent it! to condemn the victim and spare the assassin, could he be bound to any gratitude toward such a wretch? All the ideas which Marius had had for the last four years were, as it were, pierced through and through by this unexpected blow. He shuddered. Everything depended upon him.

He held in his hand, they all unconscious, those beings who were moving there before his eyes. If he fired the pistol M. Leblanc was saved and Thenardier was lost; if he did not M. Leblanc was sacrificed, and, perhaps, Thenardier escaped. To hurl down the one, or to let the other fall! remorse on either hand. What was to be done? which should he choose? be wanting to his most imperious memories, to so many deep resolutions, to his most sacred duty, to that most venerated paper! be wanting to his father's will, or suffer a crime to be accomplished? He seemed on the one hand to hear "his Ursula" entreating him for her father, and on the other, the colonel commending Thenardier to him. He felt that he was mad. His knees gave way beneath him; and he had not even time to deliberate, with such fury was the scene which he had before his eyes rushing forward. It was like a whirlwind, which he had thought himself master of, and which was carrying him away. He was on the point of fainting.

Meanwhile Thenardier, we will call him by no other name henceforth, was walking to and fro before the table in a sort of bewilderment and frenzied triumph.

He clutched the candle and put it on the mantel with such a shock that the flame was almost extinguished and the tallow was spattered upon the wall.

Then he turned toward M. Leblanc, and with a frightful look, spit out this:

"Singed! smoked! basted! spitted!"

And he began to walk again in full explosion.

"Ha!" cried he, "I have found you again at last, M. Philanthropist! M. Threadbare Millionaire! M. Giver of Dolls! old marrow-bones! ha! you do not know me? No, it was not you who came to Montfermeil, to my inn, eight years ago—the night of Christmas, 1823—it was not you who took away Fantine's child from my house! the Lark! it was not you who had a yellow coat! no! and a package of clothes in your hand just as you came here this morning! Say, now, wife! it is his mania, it appears, to carry packages of woolen stockings into houses! old benevolence, get out! Are you a hosier, M. Millionaire? You give the poor your shop sweepings, holy man! what a charlatan! Ha! you do not know me? Well, I knew you! I knew you immediately as soon as you stuck your nose in

here. Ah! you are going to find out at last that it is not all roses to go into peoples houses like that, under the pretext of their being inns, with worn-out clothes, with the appearance of a pauper to whom anybody would have given a sou, to deceive persons, to act the generous, take their help away, and threaten them in the woods, and that you do not get quit of it by bringing back afterward, when people are ruined, an overcoat that is too large and two paltry hospital coverlids, you old beggar, you child-stealer!"

He stopped, and appeared to be talking to himself for a moment. One would have said that his fury dropped like the Rhone into some hole; then, as if he were finishing aloud something that he had been saying to himself, he struck his fist on the table and cried:

"With his honest look!"

And apostrophizing M. Leblanc:

"Zounds! you made a mock of me once! You are the cause of my misfortunes! For 1,500 francs you got a girl that I had, and who certainly belonged to rich people, and who had already brought me in a good deal of money, and from whom I ought to have got enough to live on all my life! A girl who would have made up all that I lost in that abominable chop-house where they had such royal sprees and where I devoured my all like a fool! Oh! I wish that all the wine that was drunk in my house had been poison to those who drank it! But no matter! Say, now! you must have thought me green when you went away with the Lark? you had your club in the woods! you were the strongest! Revenge! The trumps are in my hand to-day. You are skunked, my good man! Oh! but don't I laugh! Indeed, I do! Didn't he fall into the trap? I told him that I was an actor, that my name was Fabantou, that I had played comedy with Mamselle Mars, with Mamselle Muche, that my landlord must be paid to-morrow, the 4th of February, and he did not even think that the 8th of January is quarter-day and not the 4th of February! The ridiculous fool! And these four paltry philippes that he brings me! Rascal! He had not even heart enough to go up to one hundred francs! And how he swallowed my platitudes! The fellow amused me. I said to myself: Blubber-lips! Go on, I have got you;

I lick your paws this morning! I will gnaw your heart to-night!"

Thenardier stopped. He was out of breath. His little narrow chest was blowing like a blacksmith's bellows. His eye was full of the base delight of a feeble, cruel, and cowardly animal, which can finally prostrate that of which it has stood in awe, and insult what it has flattered, the joy of a dwarf putting his heel upon the head of Goliath, the joy of a jackal beginning to tear a sick bull, dead enough not to be able to defend himself, alive enough yet to suffer.

M. Leblanc did not interrupt him, but said, when he stopped: "I do not know what you mean. You are mistaken. I am a very poor man, and anything but a millionaire. I do not know you; you mistake me for another."

"Ha!" screamed Thenardier, "good mountebank! You stick to that joke yet! You are in the fog, my old boy! Ah! you do not remember! You do not see who I am!"

"Pardon me, monsieur," answered M. Leblanc, with a tone of politeness which, at such a moment, had a peculiarly strange and powerful effect, "I see that you are a bandit."

Who has not noticed it, hateful beings have their tender points; monsters are easily annoyed. At this word bandit the Thenardiess sprang off the bed. Thenardier seized his chair as if he were going to crush it in his hands: "Don't you stir," cried he to his wife, and, turning toward M. Leblanc:

"Bandit! Yes, I know that you call us so, you rich people! Yes! it is true I have failed; I am in concealment, I have no bread; I have not a sou, I am a bandit! Here are three days that I have eaten nothing. I am a bandit! Ah! you warm your feet; you have Sacoski pumps, you have wadded overcoats like archbishops, you live on the first floor in houses with a porter, you eat truffles, you eat forty-franc bunches of asparagus in the month of January, and green peas; you stuff yourselves, and when you want to know if it is cold you look in the newspaper to see at what degree the thermometer of the inventor, Chevallier, stands. But we are our own thermometers! We have no need to go to the quay at the

corner of the Tour de l'Horloge, to see how many degrees below zero it is; we feel the blood stiffen in our veins and the ice reach our hearts, and we say: 'There is no God!' And you come into our caverns, yes, into our caverns, and call us bandits. But we will eat you! but we will devour you, poor little things! M. Millionaire! know this: I have been a man established in business, I have been licensed, I have been an elector, I am a citizen, I am! And you, perhaps, are not one?"

Here Thenardier took a step toward the men who were before the door, and added, with a shudder: "When I think that he dares to come and talk to me, as if I were a cobbler!"

Then addressing M. Leblanc with a fresh burst of frenzy: "And know this, too, M. Philanthropist! I am no doubtful man. I am not a man whose name nobody knows, and who comes into houses to carry off children. I am an old French soldier; I ought to be decorated. I was at Waterloo, I was, and in that battle I saved a general named the Comte de Pontmercy. This picture which you see and which was painted by David at Bruqueselles, do you know who it represents? It represents me. David desired to immortalize that feat of arms. I have General Pontmercy on my back, and I am carrying him through the storm of grape. That is history. He has never done anything at all for me, this general; he is no better than other people. But, nevertheless, I saved his life at the risk of my own, and I have my pocket full of certificates. I am a soldier of Waterloo—name of a thousand names! And now, that I have had the goodness to tell you all this, let us make an end of it; I must have some money; I must have a good deal of money; I must have an immense deal of money, or I will exterminate you, by the thunder of God!"

Marius had gained some control over his distress and was listening. The last possibility of doubt had now vanished. It was, indeed, the Thenardier of the will. Marius shuddered at that reproach of ingratitude flung at his father, and which he was on the point of justifying so fatally. His perplexities were redoubled. Moreover, there was in all these words of Thenardier, in his tone, in his gestures, in his look which flashed out flames at

every word, in this explosion of an evil nature exposing its entire self, in this mixture of braggadocio and abjectness, of pride and pettiness, of rage and folly, in this chaos of real grievances and false sentiments, in this shamelessness of a wicked man tasting the sweetness of violence, in this brazen nakedness of a deformed soul, in this conflagration of every suffering combined with every hatred, something which was as hideous as evil and as sharp and bitter as the truth.

The picture by a master, the painting by David, the purchase of which he had proposed to M. Leblanc was, the reader has guessed, nothing more than the sign of his chop-house, painted, as will be remembered, by himself, the only relic which he had saved from his shipwreck at Montfermeil.

As he had ceased to intercept Marius' line of vision, Marius could now look at the thing, and in this daub he really made out a battle, a background of smoke, and one man carrying off another. It was the group of Thenardier and Pontmercy; the savior sergeant, the colonel saved. Marius was, as it were, intoxicated; this picture in some sort restored his father to life; it was not now the sign of the Montfermeil inn, it was a resurrection; in it a tomb half-opened, from it a phantom arose. Marius heard his heart ring in his temples, he heard the cannon of Waterloo sounding in his ears; his bleeding father dimly painted upon this dusky panel startled him, and it seemed to him that that shapeless shadow was gazing steadily upon him.

When Thenardier had taken breath he fixed his blood-shot eyes upon M. Leblanc, and said in a low and abrupt tone: "What have you to say before we begin the dance with you?"

M. Leblanc said nothing. In the midst of this silence a hoarse voice threw in this ghastly sarcasm from the hall: "If there is any wood to split I am on hand!"

It was the man with the pole-axe who was making merry.

At the same time a huge face, bristly and dirty, appeared in the doorway, with a hideous laugh, which showed not teeth, but fangs.

It was the face of the man with the pole-axe.

"What have you taken off your mask for?" cried Thenardier, furiously.

"To laugh," replied the man.

For some moments M. Leblanc had seemed to follow and to watch all the movements of Thenardier, who, blinded and bewildered by his own rage, was walking to and fro in the den with the confidence inspired by the feeling that the door was guarded, having armed possession of a disarmed man, and being nine to one, even if the Thenardiess should count for but one man. In this apostrophe to the man with the pole-axe he turned his back to M. Leblanc.

M. Leblanc seized this opportunity, pushed the chair away with his foot, the table with his hand, and at one bound, with a marvelous agility, before Thenardier had time to turn around, he was at the window. To open it, get up, and step through it was the work of a second. He was half outside when six strong hands seized him, and drew him forcibly back into the room. The three "chimney doctors" had thrown themselves upon him. At the same time the Thenardiess had clutched him by the hair.

At the disturbance which this made the other bandits ran in from the hall. The old man, who was on the bed, and who seemed overwhelmed with wine, got off the pallet and came tottering along with a road-mender's hammer in his hand.

One of the "chimney doctors," whose blackened face was lighted up by the candle, and in whom Marius, in spite of this coloring, recognized Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, raised a sort of loaded club, made of a bar of iron with a knob of lead at each end, over M. Leblanc's head.

Marius could not endure this sight. "Father," thought he, "pardon me!" And his finger sought the trigger of the pistol. The shot was just about to be fired when Thenardier's voice cried:

"Do him no harm!"

This desperate attempt of the victim, far from exasperating Thenardier, had calmed him. There were two men in him, the ferocious man and the crafty man. Up to this moment, in the first flush of triumph before his prey stricken down and motionless, the ferocious man had been predominant; when the victim resisted and seemed to de-

sire a struggle the crafty man reappeared and resumed control.

"Do him no harm!" he repeated, and without suspecting it the first result of this was to stop the pistol, which was just ready to go off, and paralyze Marius, to whom the urgency seemed to disappear, and who, in view of this new phase of affairs, saw no impropriety in waiting longer. Who knows but some chance may arise which will save him from the fearful alternative of letting the father of Ursula perish or destroying the savior of the colonel?

A Herculean struggle had commenced. With one blow full in the chest M. Leblanc had sent the old man sprawling into the middle of the room, then with two back strokes had knocked down two other assailants, whom he held one under each knee; the wretches screamed under the pressure as if they had been under a granite millstone; but the four others had seized the formidable old man by the arms and the back and held him down over the two prostrate "chimney doctors." Thus, master of the latter and mastered by the former, crushing those below him and suffocating under those above him, vainly endeavoring to shake off all the violence and blows which were heaped upon him, M. Leblanc disappeared under the horrible group of the bandits like a wild boar under a howling pack of hounds and mastiffs.

They succeeded in throwing him over upon the bed nearest to the window and held him there in awe. The Thenardiess had not let go of his hair.

"Here," said Thenardier, "let it alone. You will tear your shawl."

The Thenardiess obeyed, as the she-wolf obeys her mate, with a growl.

"Now, the rest of you," continued Thenardier, "search him."

M. Leblanc seemed to have given up all resistance. They searched him. There was nothing upon him but a leather purse, which contained six francs and his handkerchief.

Thenardier put the handkerchief in his pocket.

"What! No pocket-book?" he asked.

"Nor any watch," answered one of the "chimney doctors."

"It is all the same," muttered—with the voice of a ventriloquist—the masked man who had the big key; "he is an old rough."

Thenardier went to the corner by the door and took a bundle of ropes, which he threw to them.

"Tie him to the foot of the bed," said he; and perceiving the old fellow, who lay motionless where he was stretched across the room by the blow of M. Leblanc's fist:

"Is Boulatruelle dead?" asked he.

"No," answered Bigrenaille, "he is drunk."

"Sweep him into a corner," said Thenardier.

Two of the "chimney doctors" pushed the drunkard up to the heap of old iron with their feet.

"Babet, what did you bring so many for?" said Thenardier in a low tone, to the man with the cudgel; "it was needless."

"What would you have?" replied the man with the cudgel; "they all wanted to be in. The season is bad. There is nothing doing."

The pallet upon which M. Leblanc had been thrown was a sort of hospital bed supported by four big roughly squared wooden posts. M. Leblanc made no resistance. The brigands bound him firmly, standing with his feet to the floor, by the bedpost furthest from the window and nearest to the chimney.

When the last knot was tied Thenardier took a chair and came and sat down nearly in front of M. Leblanc. Thenardier looked no longer like himself. In a few seconds the expression of his face had passed from unbridled violence to tranquil and crafty mildness. Marius hardly recognized in that polite, clerkly smile the almost beastly mouth which was foaming a moment before. He looked with astonishment upon this fantastic and alarming metamorphosis and he experienced what a man would feel who should see a tiger change itself into an attorney.

"Monsieur," said Thenardier.

And, with a gesture, dismissing the brigands, who still had their hands upon M. Leblanc:

"Move off a little and let me talk with monsieur."

They all retired toward the door. He resumed:

"Monsieur, you were wrong in trying to jump out of the window. You might have broken your leg. Now,

if you please, we will talk quietly. In the first place, I must inform you of a circumstance I have noticed, which is, that you have not yet made the least outcry."

Thenardier was right. This incident was true, although it had escaped Marius in his anxiety. M. Leblanc had only uttered a few words without raising his voice, and even in his struggle by the window with the six bandits he had preserved the most profound and the most remarkable silence.

Thenardier continued:

"Indeed! You might have cried thief a little, for I should not have found it inconvenient. Murder! that is said upon occasion, and, as far as I am concerned, I should not have taken it in bad part. It is very natural that one should make a little noise when he finds himself with persons who do not inspire him with as much confidence as they might; you might have done it, and we should not have disturbed you. We should not even have gagged you. And I will tell you why. It is because this room is very deaf. That is all I can say for it, but I can say that. It is a cave. We could fire a bomb here and at the nearest guard-house it would sound like a drunkard's snore. Here a cannon would go boom and thunder would go puff. It is a convenient apartment. But, in short, you did not cry out; that was better; I make you my compliments for it, and I will tell you what I conclude from it; my dear monsieur, when a man cries out, who is it that comes? The police. And after the police? Justice. Well! you did not cry out because you were no more anxious than we to see justice and the police come. It is because—I suspected as much long ago—you have some interest in concealing something. For our part, we have the same interest. Now we can come to an understanding."

While speaking thus it seemed as though Thenardier, with his gaze fixed upon M. Leblanc, was endeavoring to thrust the daggers which he looked into the very conscience of his prisoner. His language, moreover, marked by a sort of subdued and sullen insolence, was reserved and almost select, and in this wretch, who was just before nothing but a brigand, one could now perceive the man who studied to be a priest.

The silence which the prisoner had preserved, this pre-

caution which he had carried even to the extent of endangering his life, this resistance to the first impulse of nature—which is to utter a cry—all this, it must be said, since it had been remarked, was annoying to Marius and painfully astonished him.

The observation of Thenardier, well founded as it was, added, in Marius' eyes, still more to the obscurity of the mysterious cloud that enveloped this strange and serious face to which Courfeyrac had given the nickname of M. Leblanc. But whatever he might be, bound with ropes, surrounded by assassins, half-buried, so to speak, in a grave which was deepening beneath him every moment, before the fury as well as before the mildness of Thenardier, this man remained impassible; and Marius could not repress, at such a moment, his admiration for that superbly melancholy face.

Here was, evidently, a soul inaccessible to fear and ignorant of dismay. Here was one of those men who are superior to astonishment in desperate situations. However extreme the crisis, however inevitable the catastrophe, there was nothing there of the agony of the drowning man, staring with horrified eyes as he sinks to the bottom.

Thenardier quietly got up, went to the fireplace, took away the screen, which he leaned against the nearest pallet and thus revealed the furnace full of glowing coals, in which the prisoner could plainly see the chisel at a white heat, spotted here and there with scarlet stars.

Then Thenardier came back and sat down by M. Leblanc.

"I continue," said he. "Now we can come to an understanding. Let us arrange this amicably. I was wrong to fly into a passion just now. I do not know where my wits were; I went much too far, I talked extravagantly. For instance, because you are a millionaire, I told you that I wanted money, a good deal of money, an immense deal of money. That would not be reasonable. My God! rich as you may be, you have your expenses; who does not have them? I do not want to ruin you, I am not a catch-poll, after all. I am not one of those people who, because they have the advantage in position, use it to be ridiculous. Here, I am willing to go half-way and make some sacrifice on my part. I need only 200,000 francs."

M. Leblanc did not breathe a word. Thenardier went on: "You see that I water my wine pretty well. I do not know the state of your fortune, but I know that you do not care much for money, and a benevolent man like you can certainly give 200,000 francs to a father of a family who is unfortunate. Certainly you are reasonable also; you do not imagine that I would take the trouble I have to-day and that I would organize the affair of this evening, which is a very fine piece of work, in the opinion of these gentlemen, to end off by asking you for enough to go and drink 15 sou red wine and eat veal at Desnoyer's. Two hundred thousand francs, it is worth it. That trifle once out of your pocket, I assure you that all is said and that you need not fear a snap of the finger. You will say: but I have not 200,000 francs with me. Oh! I am not exacting. I do not require that. I only ask one thing. Have the goodness to write what I shall dictate."

Here Thenardier paused; then he added, emphasizing each word and casting a smile toward the furnace:

"I give you notice that I shall not admit that you can not write."

A grand inquisitor might have envied that smile.

Thenardier pushed the table close up to M. Leblanc and took the inkstand, a pen and a sheet of paper from the drawer, which he left partly open and from which gleamed the long blade of the knife.

He laid the sheet of paper before M. Leblanc.

"Write," said he.

The prisoner spoke at last:

"How do you expect me to write? I am tied."

"That is true; pardon me!" said Thenardier; "you are quite right."

And turning toward Bigrenaille:

"Untie monsieur's right arm."

Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, executed Thenardier's order. When the prisoner's right hand was free Thenardier dipped the pen into the ink and presented it to him.

"Remember, monsieur, that you are in our power, at our discretion, that no human power can take you away from here, and that we should be really grieved to be obliged to proceed to unpleasant extremities. I know

neither your name nor your address, but I give you notice that you will remain tied until the person whose duty it will be to carry the letter which you are about to write has returned. Have the kindness now to write."

"What?" asked the prisoner.

"I will dictate."

M. Leblanc took the pen.

Thenardier began to dictate:

"My daughter—"

The prisoner shuddered and lifted his eyes to Thenardier.

"Put 'my dear daughter,'" said Thenardier. M. Leblanc obeyed. Thenardier continued:

"Come immediately—"

He stopped.

"You call her daughter, do you not?"

"Who?" asked M. Leblanc.

"Zounds!" said Thenardier; "the little girl, the Lark."

M. Leblanc answered without the least apparent emotion: "I do not know what you mean."

"Well, go on," said Thenardier, and he began to dictate again.

"Come immediately; I have imperative need of you. The person who will give you this note is directed to bring you to me. I am waiting for you. Come with confidence."

M. Leblanc had written the whole; Thenardier added: "Ah! strike out 'come with confidence'; that might lead her to suppose that the thing is not quite clear and that distrust is possible."

M. Leblanc erased the three words.

"Now," continued Thenardier, "sign it. What is your name?"

The prisoner laid down the pen and asked: "For whom is this letter?"

"You know very well," answered Thenardier, "for the little girl, I have just told you."

It was evident that Thenardier avoided naming the young girl in question. He said "the Lark," he said "the little girl," but he did not pronounce the name. The precaution of a shrewd man preserving his own secret before his accomplices. To speak the name would have been to

give up the whole "affair" to them, and to tell them more than they needed to know.

He resumed: "Sign it. What is your name?"

"Urbain Fabre," said the prisoner.

Thenardier, with the movement of a cat, thrust his hand into his pocket, and pulled out the handkerchief taken from M. Leblanc. He looked for the mark upon it, and held it up to the candle.

"'U. F.' That is it. Urbain Fabre. Well, sign 'U. F.'"

The prisoner signed.

"As it takes two hands to fold the letter, give it to me—I will fold it."

This done, Thenardier resumed:

"Put on the address, 'Mdlle. Fabre,' at your house. I know that you live not very far from here, in the neighborhood of St. Jacques du Haut Pas, since you go there to Mass every day, but I do not know in what street. I see that you understand your situation. As you have not lied about your name you will not lie about your address. Put it on yourself."

The prisoner remained thoughtful for a moment, then he took the pen and wrote:

"Mdlle. Fabre, at M. Urbain Fabre's, Rue St. Dominique d'Enfer, No. 17."

Thenardier seized the letter with a sort of feverish convulsive movement.

"Wife!" cried he.

The Thenardiess sprang forward.

"Here is the letter. You know what you have to do. There is a fiacre below. Go right away, and come back ditto."

And addressing the man with the pole-axe: "Here, since you have taken off your hide-your-nose, go with the woman. You will get up behind the fiacre. You know where you left the *marinotte*."

"Yes," said the man.

And, leaving down his pole-axe in a corner, he followed the Thenardiess.

As they were going away Thenardier put his head through the half-open door and screamed into the hall: "Above all things do not lose the letter! Remember that you have 200,000 francs with you."

The harsh voice of the Thenardiess answered: "Rest assured, I have put it in my bosom."

A minute had not passed when the snapping of a whip was heard, which grew fainter, and rapidly died away.

"Good!" muttered Thenardier. "They are going good speed. At that speed the bourgeois will be back in three-quarters of an hour."

He drew a chair near the fireplace and sat down, folding his arms and holding his muddy boots up to the furnace.

"My feet are cold," said he.

There were now but five bandits left in the den with Thenardier and the prisoner. These men, through the masks or the black varnish which covered their faces and made of them, as fear might suggest, charcoal-men, negroes, or demons, had a heavy and dismal appearance, and one felt that they would execute a crime as they would any drudgery, quietly, without anger and without mercy, with a sort of irksomeness. They were heaped together in a corner like brutes, and were silent. Thenardier was warming his feet. The prisoner had relapsed into his taciturnity. A gloomy stillness had succeeded the savage tumult which filled the garret a few moments before.

The candle, in which a large thief had formed, hardly lighted up the enormous den; the fire had grown dull, and all their monstrous heads made huge shadows on the walls and on the ceiling.

No sound could be heard save the quiet breathing of the drunken old man, who was asleep.

Marius was waiting in an anxiety which everything increased. The riddle was more impenetrable than ever. Who was this "little girl" whom Thenardier had also called the Lark? Was it "his Ursula"? The prisoner had not seemed to be moved by this word, the Lark, and answered in the most natural way in the world: "I do not know what you mean." On the other hand, the two letters, "U. F.," were explained; it was Urbain Fabre, and Ursula's name was no longer Ursula. This Marius saw most clearly. A sort of hideous fascination held him spellbound to the place from which he observed and commanded this whole scene. There he was, almost incapable of reflection and motion, as if annihilated by such horrible things in so

close proximity. He was waiting, hoping for some movement, no matter what, unable to collect his ideas and not knowing what course to take.

"At all events," said he, "if the Lark is she I shall certainly see her, for the Thenardiess is going to bring her here. Then all will be plain. I will give my blood and my life if need be, but I will deliver her. Nothing shall stop me."

Nearly half an hour passed thus. Thenardier appeared absorbed in a dark meditation; the prisoner did not stir. Nevertheless, Marius thought he had heard at intervals and for some moments a little dull noise from the direction of the prisoner.

Suddenly Thenardier addressed the prisoner: "M. Fabre, here, so much let me tell you at once."

These few words seemed to promise a clearing up. Marius listened closely. Thenardier continued:

"My spouse is coming back—do not be impatient. I think the Lark is really your daughter, and I find it quite natural that you should keep her. But listen a moment; with your letter my wife is going to find her. I told my wife to dress up, as you saw, so that your young lady would follow her without hesitation. They will both get into the fiacre with my comrade behind. There is somewhere outside one of the barrières a *maringotte* with two very good horses harnessed. They will take your young lady there. She will get out of the carriage. My comrade will get into the *maringotte* with her, and my wife will come back here to tell us: 'It is done.' As to your young lady, no harm will be done her; the *maringotte* will take her to a place where she will be quiet, and as soon as you have given me the little 200,000 francs she will be sent back to you. If you have me arrested my comrade will give the Lark a pinch, that is all."

The prisoner did not utter a word. After a pause Thenardier continued: "It is very simple, as you see. There will be no harm done unless you wish there should be. That is the whole story. I tell you in advance so that you may know."

He stopped; the prisoner did not break the silence and Thenardier resumed: "As soon as my spouse has got back and said, 'The Lark is on her way,' we will release you,

and you will be free to go home to bed. You see we have no bad intentions."

Appalling images passed before Marius' mind. What! this young girl whom they were kidnapping they were not going to bring her here? One of those monsters was going to carry her off into the gloom! Where? And if it were she? And it was clear that it was she. Marius felt his heart cease to beat. What was he to do? Fire off the pistol? put all these wretches into the hands of justice? But the hideous man of the pole-axe would none the less be out of all reach with the young girl, and Marius remembered these words of Thenardier, the bloody signification of which he divined: "If you have me arrested my comrade will give the Lark a pinch."

Now, it was not by the colonel's will alone, it was by his love itself, by the peril of her whom he loved that he felt himself held back.

This fearful situation, which had lasted now for more than an hour, changed its aspect at every moment. Marius had the strength to pass in review successively all the most heart-rending conjectures, seeking some hope and finding none. The tumult of his thoughts strangely contrasted with the deathly silence of the den.

In the midst of this silence they heard the sound of the door of the stairway which opened, then closed.

The prisoner made a movement in his bonds.

"Here is the bourgeois," said Thenardier.

He had hardly said this when, in fact, the Thenardiess burst into the room, red, breathless, panting, with glaring eyes and cried, striking her big hands upon both hips at the same time: "False address!"

The bandit whom she had taken with her came in behind her and picked up his pole-axe again.

"False address?" repeated Thenardier.

She continued: "Nobody! Rue St. Dominique, No. 17, no M. Urbain Fabre! They do not know who he is."

She stopped for lack of breath, then continued: "M. Thenardier! this old fellow has cheated you! you are too good, do you see? I would have cut up the *Margoulette* for you in quarters to begin with! and if he had been ugly I would have cooked him alive! Then he would have had to talk, and had to tell where the girl is, and had to tell

where the rhino is! That is how I would have fixed it! No wonder that they say men are stupider than women! Nobody! No. 17! It is a large *porte-cochère*! No M. Fabre! Rue St. Dominique, full gallop, and drink-money to the driver and all! I spoke to the porter and the portress, who is a fine, stout woman; they did not know the fellow."

Marius breathed. She, Ursula, or the Lark, she whom he no longer knew what to call, was safe.

While his exasperated wife was vociferating, Thenardier had seated himself on the table; he sat a few seconds without saying a word, swinging his right leg, which was hanging down, and gazing upon the furnace with a look of savage reverie.

At last he said to the prisoner with a slow and singularly ferocious inflection: "A false address! What did you hope for by that?"

"To gain time!" cried the prisoner, with a ringing voice.

At the same moment he shook off his bonds; they were cut. The prisoner was no longer fastened to the bed save by one leg.

Before the seven men had had time to recover themselves and to spring upon him, he had bent over to the fireplace, reached his hand toward the furnace, then rose up, and now Thenardier, the Thenardiess and the bandits, thrown by the shock into the back part of the room, beheld him with stupefaction, holding above his head the glowing chisel, from which fell an ominous light, almost free and in a formidable attitude.

At the judicial inquest, to which the ambushade in the Gorbeau tenement gave rise in the sequel, it appeared that a big sou, cut and worked in a peculiar fashion, was found in the garret when the police made a descent upon it; this big sou was one of those marvels of labor which the patience of the galleys produces in the darkness and for the darkness, marvels which are nothing else but instruments of escape. These hideous and delicate products of a wonderful art are to jewelry what the metaphors of argot are to poetry. There are Benvenuto Cellinis in the galleys, even as there are Villons in language. The unhappy man who aspires to deliverance finds the means, sometimes without tools, with a folding-knife, with an old case-knife, to

split a sou into two thin plates, to hollow out these two plates without touching the stamp of the mint, and to cut a screw-thread upon the edge of the sou, so as to make the plates adhere anew. This screws and unscrews at will; it is a box. In this box they conceal a watch-spring, and this watch-spring, well-handled, cuts off rings of some size and bars of iron. The unfortunate convict is supposed to possess only a sou; no, he possesses liberty. A big sou of this kind, on subsequent examination by the police, was found open and in two pieces in the room under the pallet near the window. There was also discovered a little saw of blue steel, which could be concealed in the big sou. It is probable that when the bandits were searching the prisoner's pockets, he had this big sou upon him and succeeded in hiding it in his hand; and that afterward, having his right hand free, he unscrewed it and used the saw to cut the ropes by which he was fastened, which would explain the slight noise and the imperceptible movements which Marius had noticed.

Being unable to stoop down for fear of betraying himself, he had not cut the cords on his left leg.

The bandits had recovered from their first surprise.

"Be easy," said Bigrenaille to Thenardier. "He holds yet by one leg, and he will not go off, I answer for it. I tied that shank for him."

The prisoner now raised his voice: "You are pitiable, but my life is not worth the trouble of so long a defence. As to your imagining that you could make me speak, that you could make me write what I do not wish to write, that you could make me say what I do not wish to say—"

He pulled up the sleeve of his left arm and added: "Here."

At the same time he extended his arm and laid upon the naked flesh the glowing chisel, which he held in his right hand by the wooden handle.

They heard the hissing of the burning flesh; the odor peculiar to chambers of torture spread through the den. Marius staggered, lost in horror; the brigands themselves felt a shudder; the face of the wonderful old man hardly contracted, and, while the red iron was sinking into the smoking, impassible, and almost august wound, he turned upon Thenardier his fine face, in which there was no ha-

tred, and in which suffering was swallowed up in a serene majesty.

With great and lofty natures the revolt of the flesh and the senses against the assaults of physical pain brings out the soul, and makes it appear on the countenance in the same way as mutinies of the soldiery force the captain to show himself.

"Wretches," said he, "have no more fear for me than I have of you."

And drawing the chisel out of the wound he threw it through the window, which was still open; the horrible glowing tool disappeared, whirling into the night, and fell in the distance, and was quenched in the snow.

The prisoner resumed: "Do with me what you will."

He was disarmed.

"Lay hold of him," said Thenardier.

Two of the brigands laid their hands upon his shoulders, and the masked man with the ventriloquist's voice placed himself in front of him, ready to knock out his brains with the blow of the key at the least motion.

At the same time Marius heard beneath him, at the foot of the partition, but so near that he could not see those who were talking, this colloquy, exchanged in a low voice:

"There is only one thing more to do."

"To kill him!"

"That is it."

It was the husband and wife who were holding counsel.

Thenardier walked with slow steps toward the table, opened the drawer and took out the knife.

Marius was tormenting the trigger of his pistol. Unparalleled perplexity! For an hour there had been two voices in his conscience, one telling him to respect the will of his father, the other crying to him to succor the prisoner. These two voices, without interruption, continued their struggle, which threw him into agony. He had vaguely hoped up to that moment to find some means of reconciling these two duties, but no possible way had arisen. The peril was now urgent, the last limit of hope was passed; at a few steps from the prisoner Thenardier was reflecting, with the knife in his hand.

Marius cast his eyes wildly about him; the last mechanical resource of despair.

Suddenly he started.

At his feet, on the table, a clear ray of the full moon illuminated, and seemed to point out to him the sheet of paper. Upon that sheet he read this line, written in large letters that very morning by the elder of the Thenardier girls: "The Cognes are here."

An idea, a flash, crossed Marius' mind; that was the means which he sought; the solution of this dreadful problem which was torturing him, to spare the assassin and to save the victim. He knelt down upon his bureau, reached out his arm, caught up the sheet of paper, quietly detached a bit of plaster from the partition, wrapped it in the paper, and threw the whole through the crevice into the middle of the den.

It was time. Thenardier had conquered his last fears, or his last scruples, and was moving toward the prisoner.

"Something fell!" cried the Thenardiess.

"What is it?" said the husband.

The woman had sprung forward and picked up the piece of plaster wrapped in the paper. She handed it to her husband.

"How did this come in?" asked Thenardier.

"Egad!" said the woman. "How do you suppose it got in? It came through the window."

"I saw it pass," said Bigrenaille.

Thenardier hurriedly unfolded the paper and held it up to the candle.

"It is Eponine's writing. The devil!"

He made a sign to his wife, who approached quickly, and he showed her the line written on the sheet of paper; then he added, in a hollow voice: "Quick! the ladder! leave the meat in the trap and clear the camp!"

"Without cutting the man's throat?" asked the Thenardiess.

"We have not the time."

"Which way?" inquired Bigrenaille.

"Through the window," answered Thenardier. "As Ponnine threw the stone through the window, that shows that the house is not watched on that side."

The mask with the ventriloquist's voice laid down his big key, lifted both arms into the air, and opened and shut his hands rapidly three times without saying a word.

This was like the signal to clear the decks in a fleet. The brigands, who were holding the prisoner, let go of him; in the twinkling of an eye the rope ladder was unrolled out of the window, and firmly fixed to the casing by the two iron hooks.

The prisoner paid no attention to what was passing about him. He seemed to be dreaming or praying.

As soon as the ladder was fixed Thenardier cried: "Come, bourgeois!"

And he rushed toward the window.

But as he was stepping out, Bigrenaille seized him roughly by the collar.

"No; say now, old joker! after us."

"After us!" howled the bandits.

"You are children," said Thenardier. "We are losing time. The *railles* are at our heels."

"Well," said one of the bandits, "let us draw lots who shall go out first."

Thenardier exclaimed: "Are you fools? are you cracked? You are a mess of *jobards*! Losing time, isn't it? drawing lots, isn't it? with a wet finger! for the short straw! write our names! put them in a cap—"

"Would you like my hat?" cried a voice from the door.

They all turned round. It was Javert.

He had his hat in his hand, and was holding it out smiling.

XXI

THE VICTIMS SHOULD ALWAYS BE ARRESTED FIRST

JAVERT, at nightfall, had posted his men and hid himself behind the trees on the Rue de la Barrière des Gobelins, which fronts the Gorbeau tenement on the other side of the boulevard. He commenced by opening "his pocket," to put into it the two young girls, who were charged with watching the approaches to the den. But he only "bagged" Azelma. As for Eponine, she was not at her post; she had disappeared, and he could not take her. Then Javert put himself in rest, and listened for the signal agreed upon. The going and coming of the fiacre fretted him greatly. At last he became impatient, and,

"sure that there was a nest there," sure of being "in good luck," having recognized several of the bandits who had gone in, he finally decided to go up without waiting for the pistol-shot.

It will be remembered that he had Marius' pass-key.

He had come at the right time.

The frightened bandits rushed for the arms which they had thrown down anywhere when they had attempted to escape. In less than a second, those seven men, terrible to look upon, were grouped in a posture of defence; one with his pole-axe, another with his key, a third with his club, the others with the shears, the pincers and the hammers, Thenardier grasping his knife. The Thenardiess seized a huge paving-stone which was in the corner of the window and which served her daughters for a cricket.

Javert put on his hat again and stepped into the room, his arms folded, his cane under his arm, his sword in its sheath.

"Halt there," said he. "You will not pass out through the window, you will pass out through the door. It is less unwholesome. There are seven of you, fifteen of us. Don't collar us like Auvergnats. Be genteel."

Bigrenaille took a pistol which he had concealed under his blouse and put it into Thenardier's hand, whispering in his ear:

"It is Javert. I dare not fire at that man. Dare you?"

"*Parbleu!*" answered Thenardier.

"Well, fire."

Thenardier took the pistol and aimed at Javert.

Javert, who was within three paces, looked at him steadily, and contented himself with saying:

"Don't fire, now! It will flash in the pan."

Thenardier pulled the trigger. The pistol flashed in the pan.

"I told you so!" said Javert.

Bigrenaille threw his tomahawk at Javert's feet.

"You are the emperor of the devils! I surrender."

"And you?" asked Javert of the other bandits.

They answered:

"We too."

Javert replied, calmly:

"That is it, that is well, I said so, you are genteel."

"I only ask one thing," said Bigrenaille, "that is, that I shan't be refused tobacco while I am in solitary."

"Granted," said Javert.

And turning round and calling behind him:

"Come in now!"

A squad of sergents de ville, with drawn swords, and officers armed with axes and clubs, rushed in at Javert's call. They bound the bandits. This crowd of men, dimly lighted by a candle, filled the den with shadow.

"Handcuffs on all!" cried Javert.

"Come on then!" cried a voice, which was not a man's voice, but of which nobody could have said: "It is the voice of a woman."

The Thenardiess had intrenched herself in one of the corners of the window, and it was she who had just uttered this roar.

The sergents de ville and officers fell back.

She had thrown off her shawl, but kept on her hat; her husband, crouched down behind her, was almost hidden beneath the fallen shawl, and she covered him with her body, holding the paving stone with both hands above her head with the poise of a giantess who is going to hurl a rock.

"Take care!" she cried.

They all crowded back toward the hall. A wide space was left in the middle of the garret.

The Thenardiess cast a glance at the bandits who had allowed themselves to be tied, and muttered in a harsh and guttural tone:

"The cowards!"

Javert smiled, and advanced into the open space which the Thenardiess was watching with all her eyes.

"Don't come near! get out," cried she, "or I will crush you!"

"What a grenadier!" said Javert; "mother, you have a beard like a man, but I have claws like a woman."

And he continued to advance.

The Thenardiess, her hair flying wildly and terrible, braced her legs, bent backward, and threw the paving stone wildly at Javert's head. Javert stooped, the stone passed over him, hit the wall behind, from which it knocked down a large piece of the plastering, and returned, bound-

ing from corner to corner across the room, luckily almost empty, finally stopping at Javert's heels.

At that moment Javert reached the Thenardier couple. One of his huge hands fell upon the shoulder of the woman and the other upon her husband's head.

"The handcuffs!" cried he.

The police officers returned in a body, and in a few seconds Javert's order was executed.

The Thenardiess, completely crushed, looked at her manacled hands and those of her husband, dropped to the floor and exclaimed, with tears in her eyes:

"My daughters!"

"They are provided for," said Javert.

Meanwhile the officers had found the drunken fellow who was asleep behind the door, and shook him. He awoke, stammering:

"Is it over, Jondrette?"

"Yes," answered Javert.

The six manacled bandits were standing; however, they still retained their spectral appearance, three blackened, three masked.

"Keep on your masks," said Javert.

And, passing them in review with the eye of a Frederick II at parade at Potsdam, he said to the three "chimney doctors":

"Good-day, Bigrenaille. Good-day, Brujou. Good-day, Deux Millions."

Then, turning toward the three masks, he said to the man of the pole-axe:

"Good-day, Gueulemer."

And to the man of the cudgel:

"Good-day, Babet."

And to the ventriloquist:

"Your health, Claquesous."

Just then he perceived the prisoner of the bandits, who, since the entrance of the police, had not uttered a word and had held his head down.

"Untie monsieur," said Javert, "and let nobody go out."

This said, he sat down with authority before the table, on which the candle and the writing materials still were, drew a stamped sheet from his pocket and commenced his *procès-verbal*.

When he had written the first lines, a part of the formula which is always the same, he raised his eyes.

"Bring forward the gentleman whom these gentlemen had bound."

The officers looked about them.

"Well," asked Javert, "where is he now?"

The prisoner of the bandits, M. Leblanc, M. Urbain Fabre, the father of Ursula, or the Lark, had disappeared.

The door was guarded, but the window was not. As soon as he saw that he was unbound, and while Javert was writing, he had taken advantage of the disturbance, the tumult, the confusion, the obscurity and a moment when their attention was not fixed upon him, to leap out of the window.

An officer ran to the window and looked out; nobody could be seen outside.

The rope ladder was still trembling.

"The devil!" said Javert, between his teeth, "that must have been the best one."

XXII

THE LITTLE BOY WHO CRIED IN PART SECOND

THE day following that in which these events took place in the house on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital a child, who seemed to come from somewhere near the bridge of Austerlitz, went up by the cross alley on the right in the direction of the Barrière de Fontainebleau. Night had closed in. This child was pale, thin, dressed in rags with tow trousers in the month of February, and was singing with all his might.

At the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier an old crone was fumbling in a manure heap by the light of a street lamp; the child knocked against her as he passed, then drew back, exclaiming:

"Why, I took that for an enormous, enormous dog!"

He pronounced the word enormous the second time with a pompous and sneering voice which capitals would express very well: An enormous, ENORMOUS dog!

The old woman rose up furious.

"Jail-bird!" muttered she. "If I had not been stooping over I know where I would have planted my foot!"

The child was now at a little distance.

"K'sss! k'sss!" said he. "After all, perhaps I was not mistaken."

The old woman, choking with indignation, sprang up immediately, and the red glare of the lantern fully illuminated her livid face, all hollowed out with angles and wrinkles, with crow's-feet at the corners of her mouth. Her body was lost in the shadow, and only her head could be seen. One would have said it was the mask of decrepitude shriveled by a flash in the night. The child looked at her.

"Madame," said he, "has not the style of beauty that suits me."

He went on his way and began to sing again:

"Le roi Coupdesabot
S'en allait à la chasse,
A la chasse aux corbeaux—"

At the end of these three lines he stopped. He had reached No. 50-52, and, finding the door locked, had begun to batter it with kicks, heroic and re-echoing kicks, that revealed rather the men's shoes which he wore than child's feet which he had.

Meantime, this same old woman, whom he had met with at the corner of the Rue du Petit Banquier, was running after him with much clamor and many crazy gestures. "What's the matter? what's the matter? Good God! They are staving the door down! They are breaking into the house!"

The kicks continued.

The old woman exhausted her lungs.

"Is that the way they use houses nowadays?"

Suddenly she stopped. She had recognized the *gamin*.

"What! it is that Satan!"

"Hullo, it is the old woman," said the child. "Good-day, Burgonmuche. I have come to see my ancestors."

The old woman responded with a composite grimace, an admirable extemporization of hatred making the most of decay and ugliness, which was unfortunately lost in the obscurity.

"There's nobody there, nosey."

"Pshaw!" said the child, "where is my father, then?"

"At La Force."

"Heigho! and my mother?"

"At St. Lazare."

"Well! and my sisters?"

"At Les Madelonnettes."

The child scratched the back of his ear, looked at Ma'am Bougon and said: "Ah!"

Then he turned on his heel, and a moment afterward, the old woman, who stopped on the doorstep, heard him sing with his clear, fresh voice as he disappeared under the black elms shivering in the wintry winds:

"Le roi Coupdesabot
S'en allait à la chasse,
A la chasse aux corbeaux,
Monté sur des échasses.
Quand on passait dessous,
On lui payait deux sous."

SAINT DENIS AND IDYL OF THE RUE PLUMET

BOOK FIRST—A FEW PAGES OF HISTORY

I

WELL CUT

THE years 1831 and 1832, the two years immediately connected with the Revolution of July, are one of the most peculiar and most striking periods in history. These two years, among those which precede and those which follow them, are like two mountains. They have the revolutionary grandeur. In them we discern precipices. In them the social masses, the very strata of civilization, the consolidated group of superimposed and cohering interests, the venerable profile of the old French formation appear and disappear at every instant through the stormy clouds of systems, passions, and theories. These appearances and disappearances have been named resistance and movement. At intervals we see truth gleaming forth—that daylight of the human soul.

This remarkable period is short enough, and is beginning to be far enough from us, so that it is henceforth possible to catch its principal outlines.

We will make the endeavor.

The Restoration had been one of those intermediate phases, difficult of definition, in which there are fatigue, buzzings, murmurs, slumber, tumult, and which are nothing more or less than the arrival of a great nation at a halting-place. These periods are peculiar, and deceive the politicians who would take advantage of them. At first the nation asks only for repose; men have but one thirst—for peace; they have but one ambition—to be little. That is a translation of being quiet. Great events, great fortunes, great ventures, great men, thank God, they have seen enough of them; they have been overhead in them. They would exchange Cæsar for Prusias and Napoleon

for the king of Yvetot. "What a good little king he was!" They have walked since daybreak; it is the evening of a long and rough day; they made the first relay with Mirabeau, the second with Robespierre, the third with Bonaparte; they are thoroughly exhausted. Every one of them asks for a bed.

Devotions wearied out, heroisms grown old, ambitions full-fed, fortunes made, all seek, demand, implore, solicit—what? A place to lie down? They have it. They take possession of peace, quietness, and leisure; they are content. At the same time, however, certain facts arise, compel recognition and knock at the door on their side also. These facts have sprung from revolutions and wars; they exist, they live, they have a right to install themselves in society, and they do install themselves; and the most of the time the facts are pioneers and quartermasters that merely prepare the ground for principles.

Then this is what appears to the political philosopher.

At the same time that weary men demand repose accomplished facts demand guarantees. Guarantees to facts are the same thing as repose to men.

This is what England demanded of the Stuarts after the protector; this is what France demanded of the Bourbons after the Empire.

These guarantees are a necessity of the times. They must be accorded. The princes "grant" them, but in reality it is the force of circumstances which gives them. A profound truth and a piece of useful knowledge of which the Stuarts had no suspicion in 1662, and of which the Bourbons had not even a glimpse in 1814.

The predestined family which returned to France when Napoleon fell had the fatal simplicity to believe that it was it that gave, and that what it had given it could take back; that the House of Bourbon possessed divine right, that France possessed nothing; and that the political rights conceded in the charter of Louis XVIII were only a branch of the divine right detached by the House of Bourbon and graciously given to the people until such day as it should please the king to take it back again. Still, by the regret which the gift cost them the Bourbons should have felt that it did not come from them.

They were surly with the nineteenth century. They

made a sour face at every development of the nation. To adopt a trivial word, that is to say, a popular and a true one, they looked glum. The people saw it.

They believed that they were strong because the Empire had been swept away before them like a scene at a theatre. They did not perceive that they themselves had been produced in the same way. They did not see that they also were in that hand which had taken off Napoleon.

They believed that they were rooted because they were the past. They were mistaken; they were a portion of the past, but the whole past was France. The roots of French society were not in the Bourbons, but in the nation. These obscure and undying roots did not constitute the right of a family, but the history of a people. They were everywhere except under the throne.

The House of Bourbon was to France the illustrious and blood-stained knot of her history, but it was not the principal element of her destiny, or the essential basis of her politics. She could do without the Bourbons; she had done without them for twenty-two years; there had been a solution of continuity; they did not suspect it. And how should they suspect it, they who imagined that Louis XVII reigned on the 9th Thermidor and that Louis XVIII reigned on the day of Marengo? Never, since the beginning of history, have princes been so blind in the presence of facts and of the portion of divine authority which facts contain and promulgate. Never had that earthly pretension, which is called the right of kings, denied the divine right to such an extent.

A capital error which led that family to lay its hand upon the guarantees "granted" in 1814, upon the concessions, as it called them. Sad thing! what they called their concessions were our conquests; what they called our encroachments were our rights.

When its hour seemed come, the Restoration, supposing itself victorious over Bonaparte and rooted in the country, that is to say, thinking itself strong and thinking itself deep, took its resolution abruptly and risked its throw. One morning it rose in the face of France, and, lifting up its voice, it denied the collective title and the individual title, sovereignty to the nation liberty to the citizen. In

other words, it denied to the nation what made it a nation and to the citizen what made him a citizen.

This is the essence of those famous acts which are called the ordinances of July.

The Restoration fell.

It fell justly. We must say, however, that it had not been absolutely hostile to all forms of progress. Some grand things were done in its presence.

Under the Restoration the nation became accustomed to discussion with calmness, which was wanting in the Republic; and to grandeur in peace, which was wanting in the Empire. France, free and strong, had been an encouraging spectacle to the other peoples of Europe. The Revolution had had its say under Robespierre; the cannon had had its say under Bonaparte; under Louis XVIII and Charles X intelligence, in its turn, found speech. The wind ceased, the torch was relighted. The pure light of mind was seen trembling upon the serene summits. A magnificent spectacle, full of use and charm. For fifteen years there were seen at work, in complete peace and openly in public places, those great principles so old to the thinker, so new to the statesman: equality before the law, freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the accessibility of every function to every aptitude. This went on thus until 1830. The Bourbons were an instrument of civilization which broke in the hands of Providence.

The fall of the Bourbons was full of grandeur, not on their part, but on the part of the nation. They left the throne with gravity, but without authority; their descent into the night was not one of those solemn disappearances which leave a dark emotion to history; it was neither the spectral calmness of Charles I nor the eagle-cry of Napoleon. They went away, that is all. They laid off the crown and did not keep the halo. They were worthy, but they were not august. They fell short, to some extent, of the majesty of their misfortune. Charles X, during the voyage from Cherbourg, having a round table cut into a square table, appeared more solicitous of imperiled etiquette than of the falling monarchy. This pettiness saddened the devoted men who loved them, and the serious men who honored their race. The people, for its part,

was wonderfully noble. The nation, attacked one morning by force and arms, by a sort of royal insurrection, felt so strong that it had no anger. It defended itself, restrained itself, put things into their places, the government into the hands of the law, the Bourbons into exile—alas!—and stopped. It took the old king, Charles X, from under that dais which had sheltered Louis XIV, and placed him gently on the ground. It touched the royal personages sadly and with precaution. It was not a man, it was not a few men; it was France, all France. France victorious and intoxicated with her victory, seeming to remember herself, and putting in practice before the eyes of the whole world these grave words of Guillaume du Vair after the day of the barricades: “It is easy for those who are accustomed to gather the favors of the great, and to leap, like a bird, from branch to branch, from a grievous to a flourishing fortune, to show themselves bold toward their prince in his adversity; but to me the fortune of my kings will always be venerable, and principally when they are in grief.”

The Bourbons carried with them respect, but not regret. As we have said, their misfortune was greater than they. They faded away in the horizon.

The Revolution of July immediately found friends and enemies throughout the world. The former rushed toward it with enthusiasm and joy, the latter turned away; each according to his own nature. The princes of Europe, at the first moment, owls in this dawn, closed their eyes, shocked and stupefied, and opened them only to threaten. A fright which can be understood, an anger which can be excused. This strange Revolution had hardly been a shock; it did not even do vanquished royalty the honor of treating it as an enemy and shedding its blood. In the eyes of the despotic governments, always interested that liberty should calumniate herself, the Revolution of July had the fault of being formidable and yet being mild. Nothing, however, was attempted or plotted against it. The most dissatisfied, the most irritated, the most horrified bowed to it; whatever may be our selfishness and our prejudices, a mysterious respect springs from events in which we feel the intervention of a hand higher than that of man.

The Revolution of July is the triumph of the right prostrating the fact. A thing full of splendor.

The right prostrating the fact. Thence the glory of the Revolution of 1830, thence its mildness also. The right, when it triumphs, has no need to be violent.

The right is the just and the true.

The peculiarity of the right is that it is always beautiful and pure. The fact, even that which is most necessary in appearance, even that most accepted by its contemporaries, if it exist only as fact, and if it contain too little of the right, or none at all, is destined infallibly to become, in the lapse of time, deformed, unclean, perhaps even monstrous. If you would ascertain at once what degree of ugliness the fact may reach, seen in the distance of the centuries, look at Machiavel. Machiavel is not an evil genius, nor a demon, nor a cowardly and miserable writer; he is nothing but the fact. And he is not merely the Italian fact, he is the European fact, the fact of the sixteenth century. He seems hideous, and he is so, in presence of the moral idea of the nineteenth.

This conflict of the right and the fact endures from the origin of society. To bring the duel to an end, to amalgamate the pure ideal with the human reality, to make the right peacefully interpenetrate the fact, and the fact right, this is the work of the wise.

II

BADLY SEWED

BUT the work of the wise is one thing, the work of the able another.

The Revolution of 1830 soon grounded.

As soon as a revolution strikes the shore the able carve up the wreck.

The able, in our age, have decreed to themselves the title of statesmen—so that this word, statesman, has come to be, in some sort, a word of argot. Indeed, let no one forget, wherever there is ability only there is necessarily pettiness. To say “the able” amounts to saying “mediocrity.”

Just as saying “statesmen” is sometimes equivalent to saying “traitors.”

According to the able, therefore, revolutions such as the Revolution of July are arteries cut; a prompt ligature is needed. The right, too grandly proclaimed, is disquieting. So, the right once affirmed, the State must be re-affirmed. Liberty being assured, we must take thought for power.

Thus far the wise do not separate from the able, but they begin to distrust. Power, very well. But, first, what is power? Secondly, whence comes it?

The able seem not to hear the murmurs of objection, and they continue their work.

According to these politicians, ingenious in putting a mask of necessity upon profitable fictions, the first need of a people after a revolution, if this people forms part of a monarchical continent, is to procure a dynasty. In this way, say they, it can have peace after its revolution—that is to say, time to stanch its wounds and to repair its house. The dynasty hides the scaffolding and covers the ambulance.

Now, it is not always easy to procure a dynasty.

In case of necessity, the first man of genius, or even the first adventurer you meet, suffices for a king. You have in the first place Bonaparte, and in the second Iturbide.

But the first family you meet with does not suffice to make a dynasty. There must be a certain amount of antiquity in a race, and the wrinkles of centuries are not extemporized.

If we place ourselves at the statesmen's point of view, of course with every reservation, after a revolution, what are the qualities of the king who springs from it? He may be, and it is well that he should be, revolutionary—that is to say, a participant in his own person in this revolution, that he should have taken part in it, that he should be compromised in it, or made illustrious, that he should have touched the axe or handled the sword.

What are the qualities of a dynasty? It should be national; that is to say, revolutionary at a distance, not by acts performed, but by ideas accepted. It should be composed of the past and be historic of the future, and be sympathetic.

All this explains why the first revolutions content themselves with finding a man—Cromwell or Napoleon; and

why the second absolutely insist on finding a family—the House of Brunswick or the House of Orleans.

Royal houses resemble those banyan trees of India, each branch of which, by bending to the ground, takes root there and becomes a banyan. Each branch may become a dynasty, on the sole condition that it bend to the people.

Such is the theory of the able.

This, then, is the great art, to give a success something of the sound of a catastrophe, in order that those who profit by it may tremble also, to moderate a step in advance with fear, to enlarge the curve of transition to the extent of retarding progress, to tame down this work, to denounce and restrain the ardencies of enthusiasm, to cut off the corners and the claws, to clog triumph, to swaddle the right, to wrap up the people-giant in flannel and hurry him to bed, to impose a diet upon this excess of health, to put Hercules under convalescent treatment, to hold back the event within the expedient, to offer to minds thirsting for the ideal this nectar extended from barley-water, to take precautions against too much success, to furnish the revolution with a skylight.

The year 1830 carried out this theory, already applied to England by 1688.

The year 1830 is a revolution arrested in mid career. Half progress, quasi right. Now logic ignores the almost, just as the sun ignores the candle.

Who stops revolutions half-way? The bourgeoisie. Why?

Because the bourgeoisie is the interest which has attained to satisfaction. Yesterday it was appetite, to-day it is fulness, to-morrow it will be satiety.

The phenomenon of 1814, after Napoleon, was reproduced in 1830 after Charles X.

There has been an attempt, an erroneous one, to make a special class of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie is simply the contented portion of the people. The bourgeois is the man who has now time to sit down. A chair is not a caste.

But, by wishing to sit down, we may stop the progress even of the human race. That has often been the fault of the bourgeois.

The commission of a fault does not constitute a class. Egotism is not one of the divisions of the social order.

Moreover, we must be just even toward egotism. The state to which, after the shock of 1830, that part of the nation which is called the bourgeoisie aspired was not inertia, which is a complication of indifference and idleness, and which contains something of shame; it was not slumber, which supposes a momentary forgetfulness accessible to dreams; it was a halt.

Halt is a word formed with a singular and almost contradictory double meaning: a troop on the march; that is to say, movement; a stopping; that is to say, repose.

Halt is the regaining of strength; it is armed and watchful repose; it is the accomplished fact which plants sentinels and keeps itself upon its guard. Halt supposes battle yesterday and battle to-morrow.

This is the interval between 1830 and 1848.

What we here call battle may also be called progress.

The bourgeoisie, then, as well as the statesmen, felt the need of a man who should express this word: "Halt!" An although, because. A composite individuality, signifying revolution and signifying stability; in other words, assuring the present through the evident compatibility of the past with the future.

This man was "found at hand." His name was Louis Philippe d'Orleans.

The 221 made Louis Philippe king. Lafayette undertook the coronation. He called it the best of republics. The Hôtel de Ville of Paris replaced the Cathedral of Rheims.

This substitution of a demi-throne for the complete throne was "the work of 1830."

When the able had finished their work the immense viciousness of their solution became apparent. All this was done without reference to absolute right. The absolute right cried, "I protest!" Then, a fearful thing, it went back into the obscurity.

III

LOUIS PHILIPPE

REVOLUTIONS have a terrible arm and a fortunate hand, they strike hard and choose well. Even when incomplete, even degenerate and abused, and reduced to the condition of revolution junior, like the Revolution of

1830, they almost always retain enough of the light of Providence to prevent a fatal fall. Their eclipse is never an abdication.

Still, let us not boast too loudly; revolutions, even, are deceived, and disclose grave mistakes.

Let us return to 1830. The year 1830 was fortunate in its deviation. In the establishment which called itself order, after the Revolution was cut short, the king was better than the royalty. Louis Philippe was a rare man.

Son of a father to whom history will certainly allow attenuating circumstances, but as worthy of esteem as that father had been worthy of blame; having all private virtues and many public virtues; careful of his health, his fortune, his person, his business; knowing the value of a minute, though not always the value of a year; sober, serene, peaceful, patient; good man and good prince; sleeping with his wife and having lackeys in his palace whose business it was to exhibit the conjugal bed to the bourgeois, an ostentation of domestic regularity which had its use after the former illegitimate displays of the elder branch; knowing all the languages of Europe, and, what is rarer, all the languages of all interests, and speaking them; admirable representative of "the middle class," but surpassing it, and in every way greater than it; having the excellent sense, even while appreciating the blood from which he sprang, to estimate himself, above all, at his own intrinsic worth, and, about the question of his race even, very particular, declaring himself Orleans, and not Bourbon; really first prince of the blood, while he had only been most serene highness, but a frank bourgeois the day he was majesty; diffuse in public, concise in private; a declared, but not proven, miser; in reality one of those economical persons who are prodigal in matters of fancy or their duty; well read, but not very appreciative of letters; a gentleman, but not chivalrous; simple, calm, and strong; worshiped by his family and by his house; a seductive talker, an undeceived statesman, interiorly cold, ruled by the present interest, governing always by the nearest convenience, incapable of malice or of gratitude, pitilessly wearing out superiorities upon mediocrities, able in opposing through parliamentary majorities those mysterious unanimities which mutter almost inaudibly beneath

thrones; expansive, sometimes imprudent in his expansion, but with marvelous address in that imprudence; fertile in expedients, in faces, in masks; making France afraid of Europe and Europe afraid of France; loving his country incontestably, but preferring his family; prizing domination more than authority and authority more than dignity; a disposition which is to this extent fatal, that, turning everything toward success, it admits of ruse and does not absolutely repudiate baseness; but which is profitable to this extent, that it preserves politics from violent shocks, the state from fractures and society from catastrophes; minute, correct, vigilant, attentive, sagacious, indefatigable; contradicting himself sometimes and giving himself the lie; bold against Austria at Ancona, obstinate against England in Spain, bombarding Antwerp and paying Pritchard; singing the "Marseillaise" with conviction; inaccessible to depression, to weariness, to the taste for the beautiful and the ideal, to foolhardy generosity, to Utopia, chimeras, to anger, to vanity, to fear; having every form of personal bravery; general at Valmy, soldier at Jemappes; his life attempted eight times by regicides, yet always smiling; brave as a grenadier, courageous as a thinker; anxious merely before the chances of a European disturbance and unfit for great political adventures; always ready to risk his life, never his work; disguising his pleasure in the form of influence that he might be obeyed rather as an intelligence than as a king; endowed with observation and not with divination; paying little attention to minds, but able to read the character of men—that is to say, needing to see in order to judge; prompt and penetrating good sense, practical wisdom, ready speech, prodigious memory; digging incessantly into that memory, his only point of resemblance with Cæsar, Alexander, and Napoleon; knowing facts, details, dates, proper names; ignorant of tendencies, passions, the diverse genii of the multitude, interior aspirations, the hidden and obscure uprising of souls, in one word, all that might be called the invisible currents of conscience; accepted by the surface, but little in accord with the under-France; making his way by craft; governing too much and not reigning enough; his own prime minister, excelling in making of the pettiness of realities an obstacle to the im-

mentsity of ideas; adding to a true creative faculty for civilization, order, and organization, an indescribable spirit of routine and chicanery; founder and attorney of a dynasty; possessing something of Charlemagne and something of a lawyer; to sum up, a lofty and original figure, a prince who knew how to gain powers in spite of the restlessness of France and power in spite of the jealousy of Europe. Louis Philippe will be classed among the eminent men of his century, and would be ranked among the most illustrious rulers of history if he had had a little love of glory and had appreciated what is great to the same extent that he appreciated what is useful.

Louis Philippe had been handsome, and, when old, was still fine looking; not always agreeable to the nation, he always was to the multitude; he pleased. He had this gift, a charm. Majesty he lacked. He neither wore the crown, though king, nor white hair, though an old man. His manners were of the old régime and his habits of the new, a mixture of the noble and the bourgeois which was befitting to 1830; Louis Philippe was regnant transition; he had preserved the ancient pronunciation and the ancient orthography which he put into the service of modern opinions; he loved Poland and Hungary, but he wrote *les polonois* and pronounced *les hongrais*. He wore the dress of the National Guard like Charles X and the cordon of the Legion of Honor like Napoleon.

He went rarely to chapel, not at all to the chase, never to the opera. Incorruptible by priests, dog-keepers, and danseuses; this entered into his popularity with the bourgeoisie. He had no court. He went out with his umbrella under his arm, and this umbrella for a long time was a portion of his glory. He was something of a mason, something of a gardener, and something of a doctor; he bled a postilion who fell from his horse; Louis Philippe no more went without his lancet than Henry III without his poniard. The royalists laughed at this ridiculous king, the first who had spilled blood to save.

In the complaints of history against Louis Philippe there is a deduction to be made; there is what is to be charged to the royalty, what is to be charged to the reign, and what is to be charged to the king; three columns, each of which gives a different total. The right of democracy,

confiscated, progress made the second interest, the protests of the street violently repressed, the military execution of insurrections, émeutes passed over by arms, the Rue Transnonain, the councils of war, the absorption of the real country by the legal country, the theory of the government but half carried out, with 300,000 privileged persons, are the acts of the royalty; Belgium refused, Algeria, too, harshly conquered, and, like India, by the English, with more of barbarism than civilization, the breach of faith with Abd-el-Kader, Blaye, Deutz purchased, Pritchard paid, are the acts of the reign; the policy which looked rather to the family than to the nation is the act of the king.

As we see, when the deduction is made, the charge against the king is diminished.

His great fault was this: he was modest in the name of France.

Whence comes this fault?

We must tell.

Louis Philippe was a too fatherly king; this incubation of a family which is to be hatched into a dynasty is afraid of everything and can not bear disturbance; hence, excessive timidity, annoying to a people who have the 14th of July in their civil traditions and Austerlitz in their military traditions.

Moreover, if we throw aside public duties, which first demand to be fulfilled, this deep tenderness of Louis Philippe for his family the family deserved. This domestic group was wonderful. Their virtues emulated their talents. One of Louis Philippe's daughters, Maria d'Orleans, put the name of her race among artists as Charles d'Orleans had put it among poets. Out of her soul she made a statue which she called Jeanne d'Arc. Two of Louis Philippe's sons drew from Metternich this eulogy of a demagogue: "They are young men such as we rarely see and princes such as we never see."

This is, without keeping anything back, but also without aggravating anything, the truth about Louis Philippe.

To be prince equality, to bear within himself the contradiction of the Restoration and the Revolution, to have this threatening aspect of the revolutionist which becomes reassuring in the ruler, such was the fortune of Louis

Philippe in 1830; never was there a more complete adaptation of a man to an event; the one entered into the other, and there was an incarnation. Louis Philippe in 1830 made man. Moreover, he had in his favor that grand designation for the throne—exile. He had been proscribed, a wanderer, poor. He had lived by his labor. In Switzerland this heir to the richest princely domains in France had sold an old horse to procure food. At Richenau he had given lessons in mathematics, while his sister Adelaide did sewing and embroidery. These memories associated with a king rendered the bourgeoisie enthusiastic. He had with his own hands demolished the last iron cage of Mont St. Michel, built by Louis XI and used by Louis XV. He was the companion of Dumouriez—he was the friend of Lafayette; he had belonged to the Jacobin Club; Mirabeau had slapped him on the shoulder; Danton had said to him: “Young man!” At twenty-four years of age, in '93, being M. de Chartres, from the back of an obscure bench in the Convention, he had been present at the trial of Louis XVI, so well named “that poor tyrant.” The blind clairvoyance of the Revolution, crushing royalty in the king and the king with the royalty, almost without noticing the man in the savage overthrow of the idea, the vast storm of the tribunal assembly, the public wrath questioning, Capet not knowing what to answer, the fearful, stupefied vacillation of this royal head under that terrible blow, the relative innocence of all in that catastrophe, of those who condemned as well as of him who was condemned; he had seen these things, he had looked upon this mad whirl; he had seen the centuries appear at the bar of the Convention; he had seen behind Louis XVI that hapless, responsible by-passer, rising up in the darkness, the fear-inspiring criminal, the monarchy; and there was still in his soul a respectful fear before this limitless justice of the people, almost as impersonal as the justice of God.

The effect which the Revolution produced upon him was tremendous. His memory was like a living impression of those grand years minute by minute. One day before a witness, whom it is impossible for us to doubt, he corrected from memory the whole letter A of the alphabetic list of the Constituent Assembly.

Louis Philippe was a king in broad day. While he

reigned the press was free, the tribune was free, conscience and speech were free. The laws of September are clear and open. Knowing well the corroding power of light on privileges, he left his throne exposed to the light. History will acknowledge this loyalty.

Louis Philippe, like all historic men who have left the scene, is now to be put upon his trial by the human conscience. He is as yet only before the grand jury.

The hour in which history speaks with its free and venerable accent has not yet struck for him; the time has not come to pronounce final judgment upon this king; that austere and illustrious historian, Louis Blanc, has himself recently modified his first verdict; Louis Philippe was the elect of those two alms which are called the 221 and 1830—that is to say, of a demi-parliament and a demi-revolution; and, at all events, from the superior point of view in which philosophy ought to place herself, we could judge him here, as we have before intimated, only under certain reservations in the name of the absolute democratic principle; in the eyes of the absolute, beyond these rights—the rights of man first, the rights of the people afterward—all is usurpation; but we can say at present, having made these reservations, that, to sum up, and in whatever way he is considered, Louis Philippe, taken by himself and from the point of view of human goodness, will remain, to use the old language of ancient history, one of the best princes that ever sat upon a throne.

What is there against him? That throne. Take from Louis Philippe the king, there remains the man. And the man is good. He is sometimes so good as to be admirable. Often, in the midst of the gravest cares, after a day of struggle against the whole diplomacy of the Continent, he retired at evening into his apartment, and there, exhausted with fatigue, bowed down with sleep, what did he do? He took a bundle of documents and passed the night in reviewing a criminal prosecution, feeling that it was something to make head against Europe, but that it was a much grander thing still to save a man from the executioner. He was obstinate against his keeper of the seals; he disputed inch by inch the ground of the guillotine with the attorney-generals, “those babblers of the law,” as he called them. Sometimes the heaped-up docu-

ments covered his table; he examined them all; it was anguish to him to give up those wretched condemned heads. One day he said to the same witness whom we have just now referred to: "Last night I saved seven." During the early years of his reign the death penalty was abolished, and the re-erected scaffold was a severe blow to the king. La Grève having disappeared with the elder branch, a bourgeois Grève was instituted under the name of Barrière Saint Jacques; "practical men" felt the need of a quasi-legitimate guillotine; and this was one of the victories of Casimir Perier, who represented the more conservative portions of the bourgeoisie, over Louis Philippe, who represented its more liberal portions. Louis Philippe annotated Beccaria with his own hand. After the Fieschi machine, he exclaimed: "What a pity that I was not wounded! I could have pardoned him." At another time, alluding to the resistance of his ministers, he wrote concerning a political convict, who is one of the noblest figures of our times: "His pardon is granted; it only remains for me to obtain it." Louis Philippe was as gentle as Louis IX and as good as Henry IV.

Now, to us, in history, where goodness is the pearl of great price, he who has been good stands almost above him who has been great.

Louis Philippe having been estimated with severity by some, harshly, perhaps, by others, it is very natural that a man, now himself a phantom, who knew this king, should come forward to testify for him before history; this testimony, whatever it may be, is evidently and above all disinterested; an epitaph written by a dead man is sincere; one shade may console another shade; the sharing of the same darkness gives the right to praise; and there is little fear that it will ever be said of two tombs in exile: This one flattered the other.

IV

CREVICES UNDER THE FOUNDATION

AT the moment the drama which we are relating is about to penetrate into the depths of one of the tragic clouds which cover the first years of the reign of Louis Philippe, we could not be ambiguous, and it was

necessary that this book should be explicit in regard to this king.

Louis Philippe entered into the royal authority without violence, without direct action on his part, by the action of a revolutionary transfer, evidently very distinct from the real aim of the Revolution, but in which he, the Duke d'Orleans, had no personal initiative. He was a born prince, and believed himself elected king. He had not given himself this command; he had not taken it; it had been offered to him and he had accepted it; convinced wrongly in our opinion, but convinced that the offer was consistent with right, and that the acceptance was consistent with duty. Hence a possession in good faith. Now, we say it in all conscience, Louis Philippe being in good faith in his possession, and the democracy being in good faith in their attack, the terror which arises from social struggles is chargeable neither to the king nor to the democracy. A shock of principles resembles a shock of the elements. The ocean defends the water, the hurricane defends the air; the king defends royalty, the democracy defends the people; the relative, which is the monarchy, resists the absolute, which is the republic; society bleeds under this struggle, but what is its suffering to-day will be its safety hereafter; and, at all events, there is no censure due to those who struggle; one of the two parties is evidently mistaken; right is not like the Colossus of Rhodes, upon two shores at once, one foot in the Republic, one foot in royalty; it is indivisible, and all on one side; but those who are mistaken are sincerely mistaken; a blind man is no more a criminal than a Vendéen is a brigand.

Let us, then, impute these terrible collisions only to the fatality of things. Whatever these tempests may be, human responsibility is not mingled with them.

Let us complete this exposition.

The government of 1830 had from the first a hard life.

Born yesterday, it was obliged to fight to-day.

It was hardly installed when it began to feel on all sides vague movements directed against the machinery of July, still so newly set up and so far from secure.

Resistance was born on the morrow, perhaps even it was born on the eve.

From month to month the hostility increased, and from dumb it became outspoken.

The Revolution of July, tardily accepted, as we have said, outside of France by the kings, had been diversely interpreted in France.

God makes visible to men His will in events, an obscure text written in a mysterious language. Men make their translations of it forthwith; hasty translations, incorrect, full of faults, omissions, and misreadings. Very few minds comprehend the divine tongue. The most sagacious, the most calm, the most profound, decipher slowly, and, when they arrive with their text, the need has long gone by; there are already twenty translations in the public square. From each translation a party is born, and from each misreading a faction; and each party believes that it has the only true text, and each faction believes that it possesses the light.

Often the government itself is a faction.

There are in revolutions some swimmers against the stream, these are the old parties.

To the old parties, who are attached to the hereditary right by the grace of God, revolutions having arisen from the right of revolt, there is a right of revolt against them. An error. For in revolutions the revolted party is not the people, it is the king. Revolution is precisely the opposite of revolt. Every revolution, being a normal accomplishment, contains in itself its own legitimacy, which false revolutionists sometimes dishonor, but which persists, even when sullied, which survives, even when stained with blood. Revolutions spring, not from an accident, but from necessity. A revolution is a return from the factitious to the real. It is, because it must be.

The old legitimist parties, nevertheless, assailed the Revolution of 1830 with all the violence which springs from false reasoning. Errors are excellent projectiles. They struck it skilfully, just where it was vulnerable, at the defect in its cuirass, its want of logic; they attacked this revolution in its royalty. They cried to it: "Revolution, why this king?" Factions are blind men who aim straight.

This cry was uttered also by the republicans. But, coming from them, this cry was logical. What was blind-

ness with the legitimists was clear-sightedness with the democrats. The year 1830 had become bankrupt with the people. The democracy indignantly reproached it with its failure.

Between the attack of the past and the attack of the future, the establishment of July was struggling. It represented the moment, in conflict on the one hand with the monarchical centuries, on the other hand with the eternal right.

Moreover, externally, being no longer the Revolution, and becoming the monarchy, 1830 was obliged to keep step with Europe. To preserve peace, an increase of complication. A harmony required in the wrong way is often more onerous than a war. From this sullen conflict, always muzzled but always muttering, is born armed peace, that ruinous expedient of civilization suspected by herself. The royalty of July reared, in spite of the lash, in the harness of European cabinets. Metternich would have been glad to put it in kicking-straps. Pushed upon in France by progress, it pushed upon the monarchies in Europe, those tardigrades. Towed, it towed.

Meanwhile, within the country, pauperism, proletariat, wages, education, punishment, prostitution, the lot of woman, riches, misery, production, consumption, distribution, exchange, money credit, rights of capital, rights of labor, all these questions multiplied over society; a terrible steep.

Outside of the political parties, properly speaking, another movement manifested itself. To the democratic fermentation, the philosophic fermentation responded. The élite felt disturbed as well as the multitude; otherwise, but as much.

Thinkers were meditating, while the soil, that is to say, the people, traversed by the revolutionary currents, trembled beneath them with mysterious epileptic shocks. These thinkers, some isolated, others gathered into families and almost into communion, were turning over social questions, peacefully, but profoundly; impassible miners, who were quietly pushing their galleries into the depths of a volcano, scarcely disturbed by the sullen commotions and the half-seen glow of the lava. This tranquillity was not the least beautiful spectacle of that agitated period.

These men left to political parties the question of rights, they busied themselves with the question of happiness.

The well-being of man was what they wished to extract from society.

They raised the material questions, questions of agriculture, of industry, of commerce, almost to the dignity of a religion. In civilization such as it is constituted to small extent by God, too great by man, interests are combined, aggregated, and amalgamated in such a manner as to form actual hard rock, according to a dynamic law patiently studied by the economists, those geologists of politics.

These men, who grouped themselves under different appellations, but who may all be designated by the generic title of socialists, endeavored to pierce this rock and to make the living waters of human felicity gush forth from it.

From the question of the scaffold to the question of war their labors embraced everything. To the rights of man, proclaimed by the French Revolution, they added the rights of woman and the rights of childhood.

No one will be astonished that, for various reasons, we do not here treat fundamentally, from the theoretic point of view, the questions raised by socialism. We limit ourselves to indicating them.

All the problems which the socialists propounded, aside from the cosmogonic visions, dreams, and mysticism, may be reduced to two principal problems.

First problem:

To produce wealth.

Second problem:

To distribute it.

The first problem contains the question of labor.

The second contains the question of wages.

In the first problem the question is of the employment of force.

In the second of the distribution of enjoyment.

From the good employment of force results public power.

From the good distribution of enjoyment results individual happiness.

By good distribution we must understand not equal dis-

tribution, but equitable distribution. The highest equality is equity.

From these two things combined, public power without, individual happiness within, results social prosperity.

Social prosperity means man happy, the citizen free, the nation great.

England solves the first of these two problems. She creates wealth wonderfully; she distributes it badly. This solution, which is complete only on one side, leads her inevitably to these two extremes: monstrous opulence; monstrous misery. All the enjoyment to a few, all the privation to the rest, that is to say, to the people; privilege, exception, monopoly, feudality, springing from labor itself: a false and dangerous situation which founds public power upon private misery, which plants the grandeur of the state in the suffering of the individual. A grandeur ill-constituted, in which all the material elements are combined, and into which no moral element enters.

Communism and agrarian law think they have solved the second problem. They are mistaken. Their distribution kills production. Equal partition abolishes emulation. And consequently labor. It is a distribution made by the butcher, who kills what he divides. It is, therefore, impossible to stop at these professed solutions. To kill wealth is not to distribute it.

The two problems must be solved together to be well solved. The two solutions must be combined and form but one.

Solve the first only of the two problems, you will be Venice, you will be England. You will have like Venice an artificial power, or like England a material power; you will be the evil rich man; you will perish by violence, as Venice died, or by bankruptcy, as England will fall, and the world will let you die and fall, because the world lets everything fall and die which is nothing but selfishness, everything which does not represent a virtue or an idea for the human race.

It is, of course, understood that by these words, Venice, England, we designate not the people, but the social constructions; the oligarchies superimposed upon the nations, and not the nations themselves. The nations always have our respect and our sympathy. Venice, the people, will

be reborn; England, the aristocracy, will fall, but England, the nation, is immortal. This said, we proceed.

Solve the two problems, encourage the rich and protect the poor, suppress misery, put an end to the unjust speculation upon the weak by the strong, put a bridle upon the iniquitous jealousy of him who is on the road against him who has reached his end, adjust mathematically and fraternally wages to labor, join gratuitous and obligatory instruction to the growth of childhood, and make science the basis of manhood, develop the intelligence while you occupy the arm, be at once a powerful people and a family of happy men, democratize property, not by abolishing it, but by universalizing it, in such a way that every citizen without exception may be a proprietor, an easier thing than it is believed to be; in two words, learn to produce wealth and learn to distribute it, and you shall have material grandeur and moral grandeur combined; and you shall be worthy to call yourselves France.

This, above and beyond a few sects which ran wild, is what socialism said; this is what it sought to realize; this is what it outlined in men's minds.

Admirable efforts! sacred attempts!

These doctrines, these theories, these resistances, the unforeseen necessity for the statesman to consult with the philosopher, confused evidences half seen, a new politics to create, accordant with the Old World, and yet not too discordant with the ideal of the Revolution; a state of affairs in which Lafayette must be used to oppose Polignac, the intuition of progress transparent in the émeute, the chambers, and the street, competitions to balance about him, his faith in the Revolution, perhaps some uncertain eventual resignation arising from the vague acceptance of a definitive superior right, his desire to remain in his race, his family pride, his sincere respect for the people, his own honesty, preoccupied Louis Philippe almost painfully, and at moments, strong and courageous as he was, overwhelmed him under the difficulties of being king.

He felt beneath his feet a terrible disaggregation which was not, however, a crumbling into dust—France being more France than ever.

Dark drifts covered the horizon. A strange shadow, approaching nearer and nearer, was spreading little by lit-

tle over men, over things, over ideas; a shadow which came from indignations and from systems. All that had been hurriedly stifled was stirring and fermenting. Sometimes the conscience of the honest man caught its breath, there was so much confusion in that air in which sophisms were mingled with truths. Minds trembled in the social anxiety like leaves at the approach of the storm. The electric tension was so great that at certain moments any chance-comer, though unknown, flashed out. Then the twilight obscurity fell again. At intervals, deep and sullen mutterings enabled men to judge of the amount of lightning in the cloud.

Twenty months had hardly rolled away since the Revolution of July; the year 1832 had opened with an imminent and menacing aspect. The distress of the people; laborers without bread; the last Prince de Condé lost in the darkness; Brussels driving away the Nassaus, as Paris had driven away the Bourbons; Belgium offering herself to a French prince, and given to an English prince; the Russian hatred of Nicholas; in our rear two demons of the south, Ferdinand in Spain, Miguel in Portugal; the earth quaking in Italy; Metternich extending his hand over Bologna; France bluntly opposing Austria at Ancona; in the north a mysterious ill-omened sound of a hammer nailing Poland again into its coffin; throughout Europe angry looks keeping watch over France; England a suspicious ally, ready to push over whoever might bend, and to throw herself upon whoever might fall; the peerage sheltering itself behind Beccaria, to refuse four heads to the law; the *fleur-de-lys* erased from the king's carriage; the cross torn down from Notre Dame; Lafayette in decay; Lafitte ruined; Benjamin Constant dead in poverty; Casimir Perrier dead from loss of power; the political disease and the social disease breaking out in the two capitals of the realm, one the city of thought, the other the city of labor; at Paris civil war, at Lyons servile war; in the two cities the same furnace glare; the flush of the crater on the forehead of the people; the south fanatical, the west disturbed; the Duchess of Berry in La Vendée; plots, conspiracies, uprisings, the cholera, added to the dismal tumult of ideas, the dismal uproar of events.

V

FACTS FROM WHICH HISTORY SPRINGS AND WHICH HISTORY IGNORES

TOWARD the end of April everything was worse. The fermentation became a boiling. Since 1830 there has been here and there some little partial émeutes, quickly depressed, but again breaking out, signs of a vast underlying conflagration. Something terrible was brooding. Glimpses were caught of the lineaments, still indistinct and scarcely visible, of a possible revolution. France looked to Paris; Paris looked to the Faubourg St. Antoine.

The Faubourg St. Antoine, sullenly warmed up, was beginning to boil.

The wine-shops of the Rue de Charonne, although the junction of the two epithets seems singular applied to wine-shops, were serious and stormy.

In them the simple existence of the government was brought in question. The men there publicly discussed whether it were the thing to fight or to remain quiet. There were back shops where an oath was administered to workingmen, that they would be in the streets at the first cry of alarm, and "that they would fight without counting the number of the enemy." The engagement once taken, a man seated in a corner of the wine-shop "made a sonorous voice," and said: "You understand it! you have sworn it." Sometimes they went upstairs into a closed room, and there scenes occurred which were almost masonic. Oaths were administered to the initiated "to render service to them as they would to their own fathers." That was the formula.

In the lower rooms they read "subversive" pamphlets. "They pelted the government," says a secret report of the times.

Such words as these were heard: "I don't know the names of the chiefs. As for us we shall only know the day two hours beforehand." A workingman said: "There are 300 of us, let us put in 10 sous each, that will make 150 francs to manufacture powder and ball." Another said: "I don't ask six months, I don't ask two. In less

than a fortnight we shall meet the government face to face. With 25,000 men we can make a stand." Another said: "I don't go to bed, because I am making cartridges all night." From time to time, men "like bourgeois, and in fine coats," came, "causing embarrassment," and having the air "of command," gave a grip of the hand "to the most important," and went away. They never stayed more than ten minutes. Significant words were exchanged in a low voice: "The plot is ripe, the thing is complete."

"This was buzzed by all who were there," to borrow the very expression of one of the participants. The exaltation was such that one day, in a public wine-shop, a workingman exclaimed: "We have no arms!" One of his comrades answered: "The soldiers have!" thus parodying, without suspecting it, Bonaparte's proclamation to the army of Italy. "When they have anything more secret," adds a report, "they do not communicate it in those places." One can hardly comprehend what they could conceal after saying what they did.

The meetings were sometimes periodical. At some there were never more than eight or ten, and always the same persons. In others, anybody who chose entered, and the room was so full that they were forced to stand. Some were there from enthusiasm and passion; others because "it was on their way to their work." As in the time of the Revolution, there were in these wine-shops some female patriots, who embraced the newcomers.

Other expressive facts came to light.

A man entered a shop, drank and went out, saying: "Wine-merchant, what is due the Revolution will pay."

At a wine-shop opposite the Rue de Charonne revolutionary officers were elected. The ballots were gathered in caps.

Some workingmen met at a fencing-master's, who gave lessons in the Rue de Cotte. There was a trophy of arms there, formed of wooden swords, canes, clubs, and foils. One day they took the buttons off the foils. A workingman said: "We are twenty-five; but they don't count on me, because they look upon me as a machine." This machine was afterward Quénisset.

All the little things which were premeditated gradually acquired some strange notoriety. A woman sweeping her

doorstep said to another woman: "For a long time they have been hard at work making cartridges." Proclamations were read in the open street, addressed to the National Guards of the departments. One of these proclamations was signed: "Burtot, wine-merchant."

One day at a liquor-dealer's door in the Lenoir market, a man with a heavy beard and an Italian accent mounted on a block and read aloud a singular writing which seemed to emanate from a secret power. Groups formed about him and applauded. The passages which stirred the crowd most were caught and noted down.

"Our doctrines are trammeled, our proclamations are torn down, our posters are watched and thrown into prison." "The recent fall in cottons has converted many moderates." "The future of the peoples is being worked out in our obscure ranks." "Behold the statement of the matter: action or reaction, revolution or counter-revolution. For in our times there is no belief longer in inertia or in immobility. For the people or against the people, that is the question. There is no other." "The day that we no longer suit you, crush us, but until then help us to go forward." All this in broad day.

Other acts, bolder still, were suspected by the people on account of their very boldness. On the 4th of April, 1832, a passerby mounted the block at the corner of the Rue St. Marguerite and cried: "I am a Babouvist." But under Babeuf the people scented Gisquet.

Among other things, this man said: "Down with property! The opposition of the left are cowards and traitors. When they want to be right, they preach revolution. They are democrats that they may not be beaten, and royalists that they may not fight. The republicans are feathered beasts. Distrust the republicans, citizen laborers."

"Silence, citizen spy!" cried a workingman.

This put an end to the discourse.

Mysterious incidents occurred.

At nightfall a workingman met "a well-dressed man" near the canal, who said to him: "Where are you going, citizen?" "Monsieur," said the workingman, "I have not the honor of knowing you." "I know you very well." And the man added: "Don't be afraid. I am the officer of the committee. They are suspicious that you are not

very sure. You know that if you reveal anything we have an eye upon you." Then he gave the workingman a grip of the hand and went away, saying: "We shall meet again soon."

The police, on the scout, overheard, not merely in the wine-shops, but in the street, singular dialogues: "Get yourself admitted very quick," said a weaver to a cabinet-maker.

"Why?"

"There is going to be some shooting."

Two passers in rags exchanged these remarkable phrases, big with apparent *Jacquerie*:

"Who governs us?"

"M. Philippe."

"No, it's the bourgeoisie."

You would be mistaken if you supposed that we use the word *Jacquerie* in bad part. The Jacques were the poor.

Another time, two men were heard passing by; one of whom said to the other: "We have a good plan of attack."

Of a private conversation between four men crouching in a ditch at the fork of a road by the *Barrière du Trône*, there was heard only this: "All that is possible will be done that he may promenade in Paris no more."

Who was *he*? Threatening obscurity.

"The principal chiefs," as they said in the *Faubourg*, kept out of sight. They were believed to meet, to concert together, in a wine-shop near *Point St. Eustache*. One named Aug—, chief of the tailors' benevolent society, *Rue Mondétour*, was thought to act as principal intermediary between the chiefs and the *Faubourg St. Antoine*. Nevertheless, there was always much obscurity about these chiefs, and no actual fact could weaken the singular boldness of the response afterward made by a prisoner before the court of peers.

"Who was your chief?"

"I knew none and I recognized none."

Still, it was hardly more than words, transparent, but vague; sometimes rumors in the air, they-says, hearsay. Other indications were discovered.

A carpenter, engaged on the *Rue de Ruelly* in nailing the boards of a fence about a lot on which a house was

building, found in the lot a fragment of a torn letter, on which the following lines were still legible:

The committee must take measures to prevent recruiting in the sections for the different societies.

And in a postscript:

We have learned that there are muskets at No. 5 (bis) Rue du Faubourg Poissonnière, to the number of 5,000 or 6,000, at an armorer's in that court. The section has no arms.

What excited the carpenter and made him show the thing to his neighbors, was that a few steps further on he picked up another paper also torn, but still more significant, the form of which we reproduce on account of the historic interest of these strange documents:

Q	C	D	S	Learn this list by heart. Afterward tear it up. Men who are admitted will do the same when you have trans- mitted them their orders. Health and fraternity. <i>u og a' fe</i> L.
---	---	---	---	---

Those who were at the time in the secret of this discovery did not know till afterward the meaning of these four capitals: *quinturions*, *centurions*, *decurions*, *scouts*, and the sense of those letters: *u og a' fe*, which was a date, and which meant *this 15th April, 1832*. Under each capital were inscribed names followed by very characteristic indications. Thus: "Q. *Baunerel*, 8 muskets, 83 cartridges. Sure man. C. *Boubière*, 1 pistol, 40 cartridges. D. *Rollet*, 1 foil, 1 pistol, 1 pound of powder. S. *Teisier*, 1 sabre, 1 cartridge-box. Exact. *Terreur*, 8 muskets, brave," etc.

Finally this carpenter found, in the same inclosure also, a third paper on which was written in pencil, but very legibly, this enigmatic list:

Unity. Blanchard: dry-tree, 6.

Barra. Soize. Salle au Comte.

Kosciusko. Aubry the butcher?

J. J. R.

Caius Gracchus.

Right of revision. Dufond. Four.

Fall of the Girondins. Derbac. Maubuée.

Washington. Pinson, 1 pist., 86 cart.

Marseillaise.

Sover. of the people. Michel Quincampoix. Saber.

Hoche.

Marceau. Plato. Dry-tree.

Warsaw. Tilly, crier of *Le Populaire*.

The honest bourgeois who finally came into possession of this new list knew its signification. It appeared that this list gave the complete nomenclature of the sections of the fourth arrondissement of the "Society of the Rights of Man" with the names and residences of the chiefs of sections. At this day, when all these facts then unknown are matter of history only, they can be published. It should be added that the foundation of the "Society of the Rights of Man" seems to have been posterior to the time when this paper was found. Perhaps it was merely a draft.

Meanwhile, after rumors and speeches, after written indications, material facts began to leak out.

In the Rue Popincourt, at an old curiosity-shop, there were seized in a bureau drawer seven sheets of gray paper all evenly folded in quarto; these sheets inclosed twenty-six squares of the same gray paper folded in the form of cartridges, and a card upon which was written:

Saltpeter, 12 ounces.

Sulphur, 2 ounces.

Charcoal, 2 ounces and a half.

Water, 2 ounces.

The official report of the seizure stated that the drawer exhaled a strong odor of powder.

A mason going home after his day's work forgot a little package on a bench near the bridge of Austerlitz. This package was carried to the guard-house. It was opened and disclosed two printed dialogues signed "Lahautière," a song entitled "Workingmen, Associate," and a tin box full of cartridges.

A workingman, drinking with a comrade, made him put his hand on him to see how warm he was; the other felt a pistol under his vest.

In a ditch on the boulevard, between Père Lachaise and the Barrière du Trône, at the most solitary spot, some children, playing, discovered under a heap of chips and rubbish a bag which contained a bullet-mold, a wooden mandrel for making cartridges, a wooden mortar in which there were some grains of hunting powder and a little melting-pot, the interior of which showed unmistakable traces of melted lead.

Some policemen, penetrating suddenly at five o'clock in the morning into the house of a man named Pardon, who was afterward sectionary of the section of the Barricade Merry, and was killed in the insurrection of April, 1834, found him standing not far from his bed with cartridges in his hands which he was in the act of making.

About the hour when workingmen rest, two men were seen to meet between the Barrière Picpus and the Barrière Charenton in a little cross alley between two walls near a wine dealer's who had a card-table before his door. One took a pistol from under his blouse and handed it to the other. At the moment of handing it to him he perceived that the perspiration from his breast had communicated some moisture to the powder. He primed the pistol and added some powder to that which was already in the pan. Then the two men went away.

A man named Gallais, afterward killed in the Rue Beaubourg in the affair of April, boasted that he had seven hundred cartridges and twenty-four gun-flints at home.

The government received word one day that arms had just been distributed in the Faubourg and 200,000 cartridges. The week afterward 30,000 cartridges were distributed. A remarkable thing, the police could not seize one. An intercepted letter contained:

The day is not distant when, in four hours by the clock, 80,000 patriots will be under arms.

All this fermentation was public, we might almost say tranquil. The imminent insurrection gathered its storm calmly in the face of the government. No singularity was wanting in this crisis, still subterranean, but already

perceptible. Bourgeois talked quietly with workingmen about the preparations. They would say: "How is the émeute coming on?" in the same tone in which they would have said: "How is your wife?"

A furniture dealer, Rue Moreau, asked: "Well, when do you attack?"

Another shopkeeper said:

"You will attack very soon, I know. A month ago, there were 15,000 of you, now there are 25,000 of you." He offered a gun and a neighbor offered a little pistol which he wanted to sell for seven francs.

The revolutionary fever, however, was increasing. No point of Paris or of France was exempt from it. The artery pulsed everywhere. Like those membranes which are born of certain inflammations and formed in the human body, the network of the secret societies began to spread over the country. From the association of the "Friends of the People," public and secret at the same time, sprang the "Society of the Rights of Man," which dated one of its orders of the day thus: "Pluviôse, year '40 of the Republican era," which was to survive even the decrees of the court of assizes pronouncing its dissolution and which had no hesitation in giving its sections such significant names as these:

"The Pikes."

"Tocsin."

"Alarm Gun."

"Phrygian Cap."

"Twenty-first January."

"The Beggars."

"The Vagrants."

"Forward March."

"Robespierre."

"Level."

"Ca ira."

The "Society of the Rights of Man" produced the "Society of Action." These were the more impatient who left it and ran forward. Other associations sought to recruit from the large mother societies. The sectionaries complained of being pestered by this. Thus arose "The Gallic Society" and the "Organizing Committee of the Municipalities." Thus the associations for the "Freedom of the

Press," for "Individual Freedom," for "The Instruction of the People Against Direct Taxes." Then the "Society of the Equalist Workingmen," which divided into three factions—the "Equalists," the "Communists," and the "Reformers." Then the "Army of the Bastiles," a sort of cohort with a military organization, four men commanded by a corporal, ten by a sergeant, twenty by a second lieutenant, forty by a lieutenant; there were never more than 500 men who knew each other. A creation in which precaution was combined with boldness, and which seems marked with the genius of Venice. The central committee, which was the head, had two arms—the "Society of Action" and the "Army of the Bastiles." A legitimatist association—the "Chevaliers of Fidelity"—moved among these republican affiliations. But it was denounced and repudiated.

The Parisian societies ramified into the principal cities. Lyons, Nantes, Lisle, and Marseilles had their "Society of the Rights of Man," the "Carbonari," the "Free Men." Aix had a revolutionary society which was called the "Cougourde." We have already pronounced this word.

At Paris the Faubourg St. Marceau was hardly less noisy than the Faubourg St. Antoine, and the schools not less excited than the faubourgs. A café in the Rue St. Hyacinthe, and the drinking and smoking room of the Seven Billiards, Rue des Mathurin St. Jacques, served as rallying places for the students. The "Society of the Friends of the A B C," affiliated with the "Mutualists" of Angers and with the "Cougourde" of Aix, met, as we have seen, at the Café Musain. These same young people also gathered, as we have said, in a restaurant wine-shop near the Rue Mondétour, which was called Corinthe. These meetings were secret, others were as public as possible, and we may judge of their boldness by this fragment of an interrogatory during one of the subsequent trials: "Where was this meeting held?" "Rue de la Paix." "In whose house?" "In the street." "What sections were there?" "But one." "Which one?" "The Manuel section." "Who was chief?" "I." "You are too young to have formed alone the grave resolution of attacking the government. Whence came your instructions?" "From the central committee."

The army was mined at the same time as the population, as was proved afterward by the movements of Bédord, Lunéville, and Epinal. They counted on the fifty-second regiment, the fifth, the eighth, the thirty-seventh, and the twentieth light. In Burgundy and the cities of the south "The Tree of Liberty" was planted. That is to say, a pole surmounted by a red cap.

Such was the situation.

The situation was, as we said in the beginning, rendered tangible and emphatic by the Faubourg St. Antoine more than by any other portion of the population. There was the stitch in the side.

This old faubourg, populous as an ant-hill, industrious, courageous and cholerick as a hive, was thrilling with the expectation and the desire for a commotion. Everything was in agitation, and yet labor was not interrupted on that account. Nothing can give an idea of that vivid yet dark phase of affairs. There are in that faubourg bitter distresses hidden under garret roofs; there are there also ardent and rare intelligences. And it is especially in reference to distress and intelligence that it is dangerous for extremes to meet.

The Faubourg St. Antoine had still other causes of excitement, for it felt the rebound of the commercial crises, of the failures, the strikes and stoppages, inherent in great political disturbances. In time of revolution misery is at once cause and effect. The blow which it strikes returns upon itself. This population, full of proud virtue, filled with latent caloric to the highest point, always ready for an armed contest, prompt to explode, irritated, deep, mined, seemed only waiting for the fall of a spark. Whenever certain sparks are floating over the horizon, driven by the wind of events, we can not but think of the Faubourg St. Antoine and the terrible chance which has placed that powder-mill of sufferings and ideas at the gates of Paris.

The wine-shops of the Faubourg St. Antoine, more than once referred to in the preceding sketch, have a notoriety which is historic. In times of trouble their words are more intoxicating than their wine. A sort of prophetic spirit and an odor of the future circulate in them, swelling hearts and enlarging souls. The wine-shops of the Faubourg St. Antoine resemble those taverns of Mount

Aventine, over the Sibyl's cave, and communicating with the deep and sacred afflatus; taverns whose tables were almost tripods, and where men drank what Ennius calls "the sibylline wine."

The Faubourg St. Antoine is a reservoir of people. Revolutionary agitation makes fissures in it through which flows popular sovereignty. This sovereignty may do harm; it makes mistakes like everything else; but, even when led astray, it is still grand. We may say of it as of the blind Cyclops, *Ingens*.

In '93, according as the idea which was afloat was good or bad, according as it was the day of fanaticism or of enthusiasm, there came from the Faubourg St. Antoine sometimes savage legions, sometimes heroic bands.

Savage. We must explain this word. What was the aim of those bristling men who in the demiurgic days of revolutionary chaos, ragged, howling, wild, with tomahawk raised, and pike aloft, rushed over old overturned Paris? They desired the end of oppression, the end of tyrannies, the end of the sword, labor for man, instruction for children, social gentleness for woman, liberty, equality, fraternity, bread for all, ideas for all, the edenization of the world, progress; and this holy, good, and gentle thing, progress, pushed to the wall and beside themselves, they demanded, terrible, half-naked, a club in their grasp, and a roar in their mouth. They were savages, yes; but the savages of civilization.

They proclaimed the right furiously; they desired, were it through fear and trembling, to force the human race into paradise. They seemed barbarians, and they were saviors. With the mask of night they demanded the light.

In contrast with these men, wild, we admit, and terrible, but wild and terrible for the good, there are other men, smiling, embroidered, gilded, beribboned, bestarred, in silk stockings, in white feather, in yellow gloves, in varnished shoes, who, leaning upon a velvet table by the corner of a marble mantel, softly insist upon the maintenance and the preservation of the past, the Middle Ages, divine right, fanaticism, ignorance, slavery, the death penalty, and war, glorifying politely and in mild tones the sabre, the stake, and the scaffold. As for us, if we were compelled to choose

between the barbarians of civilization and the civilized of barbarism, we would choose the barbarians.

But, thanks to Heaven, other choice is possible. No abrupt fall is necessary, forward more than backward. Neither despotism nor terrorism. We desire progress with gentle slope.

God provides for this. The smoothing of acclivities is the whole policy of God.

VI

ENJOLRAS AND HIS LIEUTENANTS

NOT far from this period, Enjolras, in view of possible events, took a sort of mysterious account of stock.

All were in conventicle at the Café Musain.

Enjolras said, mingling with his words a few semi-enigmatic but significant metaphors:

"It is well to know where we are and on whom we can rely. If we desire fighting men we must make them. Have the wherewith to strike. That can do no harm. Travelers have a better chance of catching a thrust of a horn when there are bulls in the road than when there are none. Let us, then, take a little account of the herd. How many are there of us? We can not put this work off till to-morrow. Revolutionists ought always to be ready; progress has no time to lose. Let us not trust to the moment. Let us not be taken unprepared. We must go over all the seams which we have made, and see if they hold. This business should be probed to the bottom to-day. Courfeyrac, you will see the Polytechnicians. It is their day out. To-day, Wednesday. Feuilly, will you not see the men of the Glacière? Combeferre has promised me to go to Picpus. There is really an excellent swarm there. Bahorel will visit the Estrapade. Prouvaire, the masons are growing lukewarm; you will bring us news from the lodge in the Rue de Grenelle St. Honore. Joly will go to Dupuytren's clinique and feel the pulse of the medical school. Bossuet will make a little tour in the Palace of Justice and chat with the young lawyers. I will take charge of the 'Cougourde.'"

"Then it is all arranged," said Courfeyrac.

"No."

"What more is there, then?"

"A very important thing."

"What is it?" inquired Combeferre.

"The Barrière du Maine," answered Enjolras.

Enjolras remained a moment, as it were, absorbed in his reflections, then resumed:

"At the Barrière du Maine there are marble cutters, painters, assistants in sculptors' studios. It is an enthusiastic family, but subject to chills. I do not know what has ailed them for some time. They are thinking of other things. They are fading out. They spend their time in playing dominoes. Somebody must go and talk to them a little, and firmly, too. They meet at Richefeu's. They can be found there between noon and one o'clock. We must blow upon these embers. I had counted on that absent-minded Marius for this, for on the whole he is good, but he does not come any more. I must have somebody for the Barrière du Maine. I have nobody left."

"I," said Grantaire. "I am here."

"You?"

"I."

"You to indoctrinate republicans! you to warm up in the name of principles hearts that have grown cold!"

"Why not?"

"Is it possible that you can be good for anything?"

"Yes, I have a vague ambition for it," said Grantaire.

"You don't believe in anything."

"I believe in you."

"Grantaire, do you want to do me a service?"

"Anything. Polish your boots."

"Well, don't meddle with our affairs. Sleep off your bitters."

"You are an ingrate, Enjolras."

"You would be a fine man to go to the Barrière du Maine! you would be capable of it!"

"I am capable of going down the Rue des Grès, of crossing the Place St. Michel, of striking off through the Rue M. le Prince, of taking the Rue de Vaugirard, of passing the Carmes, of turning into the Rue d'Assas, of reaching the Rue du Cherche Midi, of leaving behind me the Conseil de Guerre, of hurrying through the Rue des

Vieilles Tuileries, of striding through the boulevard, of following the Chaussée du Maine, of crossing over the Barrière, and of entering Richefeu's. I am capable of that. My shoes are capable of it."

"Do you know anything about these comrades at Richefeu's?"

"Not much. We are on good terms, though."

"What will you say to them?"

"I will talk to them about Robespierre, faith. About Danton, about principles."

"You!"

"I. But you don't do me justice. When I am about it I am terrible. I have read Prudhomme, I know the contract social, I know my constitution of the year Two by heart. 'The liberty of the citizen ends where the liberty of another citizen begins.' Do you take me for a brute? I have an old assignat in my drawer. The rights of man, the sovereignty of the people, zounds! I am even a little of a Hébertist. I can repeat for six hours at a time, watch in hand, superb things."

"Be serious," said Enjolras.

"I am savage," answered Grantaire.

Enjolras thought for a few seconds, and made the gesture of a man who forms his resolution.

"Grantaire," said he gravely, "I consent to try you. You shall go to the Barrière du Maine."

Grantaire lived in a furnished room quite near the Café Musain. He went out, and came back in five minutes. He had been home to put on a Robespierre waistcoat.

"Red," said he as he came in, looking straight at Enjolras.

Then, with the flat of his huge hand, he smoothed the two scarlet points of his waistcoat over his breast.

And, approaching Enjolras, he whispered in his ear: "Set your mind at ease."

He jammed down his hat, resolutely, and went out.

A quarter of an hour later the back-room of the Café Musain was deserted. All the "Friends of the A B C" had gone, each his own way, to their business. Enjolras, who had reserved the "Cougourde" for himself, went out last.

Those of the "Cougourde" of Aix who were at Paris

met at that time on the Plain of Issy, in one of the abandoned quarries so numerous on that side of Paris.

Enjolras, on his way toward this place of rendezvous, passed the situation in review. The gravity of events was plainly visible. When events, premonitory of some latent social malady, are moving heavily along, the least complication stops them and shackles them. A phenomenon whence come overthrows and new berths. Enjolras caught glimpses of a luminous uprising under the dark skirts of the future. Who knows? the moment was, perhaps, approaching. The people seizing their rights again, what a beautiful spectacle! The Revolution majestically resuming possession of France, and saying to the world: to be continued to-morrow! Enjolras was content. The furnace was heating. He had, at that very instant, a powder-train of friends extended over Paris. He was composing in his thought, with the philosophic and penetrating eloquence of Combeferre, the cosmopolitan enthusiasm of Feuilly, Courfeyrac's animation, Bahorel's laughter, Jean Prouvaire's melancholy, Joly's science, and Bossuet's sarcasms, a sort of electric spark taking fire in all directions at once. All in the work. Surely, the result would answer to the effort. This was well. This led him to think of Grantaire. "Stop," said he to himself; "the Barrière du Maine hardly takes me out of my way. Suppose I go as far as Richefeu's? I let us get a glimpse of what Grantaire is doing, and how he is getting along."

One o'clock sounded from the belfry of Vaugirard when Enjolras reached the Richefeu smoking-room. He pushed open the door, went in, folded his arms, letting the door swing to so that it hit his shoulders, and looked into the room full of tables, men, and smoke.

A voice was ringing out into the mist, sharply answered by another voice. It was Grantaire talking with an adversary, whom he had found.

Grantaire was seated opposite another figure, at a table of St. Anne marble strewn with bran, and dotted with dominoes; he was striking the marble with his fist, and what Enjolras heard was this:

"Double six."

"Four."

"The beast! I can't play."

"You are done for. Two."

"Six."

"Three."

"Ace."

"It is my lay."

"Four points."

"Hardly."

"Yours."

"I made an awful blunder."

"You are doing well."

"Fifteen."

"Seven more."

"That makes me twenty-two. [Musing.] Twenty-two!"

"You didn't expect the double six. If I had laid it in the beginning it would have changed the whole game."

"Two again."

"Ace."

"Ace? Well, five."

"I haven't any."

"You laid, I believe?"

"Yes."

"Blank."

"Has he any chance? Ah! you have one chance! [Long reverie.] Two."

"Ace."

"Neither a five nor an ace. That is bothering for you."

"Domino."

"Dogs on it!"

BOOK SECOND—EPONINE

I

THE FIELD OF THE LARK

MARIUS had seen the unexpected dénouement of the ambuscade upon the track of which he had put Javert; but hardly had Javert left the old ruin, carrying away his prisoners in three coaches, when Marius also slipped out of the house. It was only nine o'clock in the evening. Marius went to Courfeyrac's. Courfeyrac was no longer

the imperturbable inhabitant of the Latin quarter; he had gone to live in the Rue de la Verrerie "for political reasons"; this quarter was one of those in which the insurrection was fond of installing itself in those days. Marius said to Courfeyrac: "I have come to sleep with you." Courfeyrac drew a mattress from his bed, where there were two, laid it on the floor and said: "There you are."

The next day, by seven o'clock in the morning, Marius went back to the tenement, paid his rent and what was due to Ma'am Bougon, had his books, bed, table, bureau, and his two chairs loaded upon a hand-cart, and went off without leaving his address; so that when Javert came back in the forenoon to question Marius about the events of the evening, he found only Ma'am Bougon, who answered him, "Moved."

Ma'am Bougon was convinced that Marius was somehow an accomplice of the robbers seized the night before. "Who would have thought so?" she exclaimed among the portresses of the quarter. "A young man who had so much the appearance of a girl!"

Marius had two reasons for this prompt removal. The first was, that he now had a horror of that house where he had seen, so near at hand, and in all its most repulsive and most ferocious development, a social deformity perhaps still more hideous than the evil rich man—the evil poor. The second was, that he did not wish to figure in a trial which would probably follow, and be brought forward to testify against Thenardier.

Javert thought that the young man, whose name he had not retained, had been frightened and had escaped, or, perhaps, had not even returned home at the time of the ambushade; still he made some effort to find him, but he did not succeed.

A month rolled away, then another. Marius was still with Courfeyrac. He knew from a young attorney, a habitual attendant in the anterooms of the court, that Thenardier was in solitary confinement. Every Monday Marius sent to the clerk of La Force five francs for Thenardier.

Marius, having now no money, borrowed the five francs of Courfeyrac. It was the first time in his life that he had borrowed money. This periodical five francs was a double

enigma to Courfeyrac who furnished them, and to Thenardier who received them. "To whom can it go?" thought Courfeyrac. "Where can it come from?" Thenardier asked himself.

Marius, moreover, was in sore affliction. Everything had relapsed into darkness. He no longer saw anything before him; his life was again plunged into that mystery in which he had been blindly groping. He had for a moment seen close at hand in that obscurity the young girl whom he loved, the old man who seemed her father, these unknown beings who were his only interest and his only hope in this world; and at the moment he had thought to hold them fast a breath had swept all those shadows away. Not a spark of certainty or truth had escaped even from that most fearful shock. No conjecture was possible. He knew not even the name which he had thought he knew. Certainly it was no longer Ursula. And the Lark was a nickname. And what should he think of the old man? Was he really hiding from the police? The white-haired workingman whom Marius had met in the neighborhood of the Invalides recurred to his mind. It now became probable that that workingman and M. Leblanc were the same man. He disguised himself, then? This man had heroic sides and equivocal sides. Why had he not called for help? why had he escaped? was he, yes or no, the father of the young girl? Finally, was he really the man whom Thenardier thought he recognized? Could Thenardier have been mistaken? So many problems without issue. All this, it is true, detracted nothing from the angelic charms of the young girl of the Luxembourg. Bitter wretchedness; Marius had a passion in his heart and night over his eyes. He was pushed, he was drawn, and he could not stir. All had vanished except love. Even of love he had lost the instincts and the sudden illuminations. Ordinarily, this flame which consumes us illumines us also a little and sheds some useful light without. Those vague promptings of passion Marius no longer even heard. Never did he say to himself: "Suppose I go there? suppose I try this?" She, whom he could no longer call Ursula, was evidently somewhere; nothing indicated to Marius the direction in which he must seek for her. His whole life was now resumed in two words: an absolute

uncertainty in an impenetrable mist. To see her again—her—he aspired to this continually; he hoped for it no longer.

To crown all, want returned. He felt close upon him, behind him, that icy breath. During all these torments, and now for a long time, he had discontinued his work, and nothing is more dangerous than discontinued labor; it is habit lost. A habit easy to abandon, difficult to resume.

A certain amount of reverie is good, like a narcotic in discreet doses. It soothes the fever, sometimes high, of the brain at work, and produces in the mind a soft and fresh vapor which corrects the too angular contours of pure thought, fills up the gaps and intervals here and there, binds them together, and blunts the sharp corners of ideas. But too much reverie submerges and drowns. Woe to the brain-worker who allows himself to fall entirely from thought into reverie! He thinks that he shall rise again easily, and he says that, after all, it is the same thing. An error!

Thought is the labor of the intellect, reverie is its pleasure. To replace thought by reverie is to confound poison with nourishment.

Marius, we remember, had begun in this way. Passion supervened, and had at last precipitated him into bottomless and aimless chimeras. One no longer goes out of the house except to walk and dream. Sluggish birth. A tumultuous and stagnant gulf. And, as work diminishes, necessities increase. This is the law. Man, in the dreamy state, is naturally prodigal and luxurious; the relaxed mind can not lead a severe life. There is, in this way of living, some good mingled with the evil, for if the softening be fatal, the generosity is wholesome and good. But the poor man who is generous and noble, and who does not work, is lost. His resources dry up, his necessities mount up. Fatal slope, down which the firmest and the noblest are drawn as well as the weakest and the most vicious, and which leads to one of these two pits, suicide or crime.

By continually going out for reverie there comes a day when you go out to throw yourself into the water.

The excess of reverie produces men like Escousse and Lebras.

Marius was descending this slope with slow steps, his eyes fixed upon her whom he saw no more. What we have here written seems strange, and still it is true. The memory of an absent being grows bright in the darkness of the heart; the more it has disappeared the more radiant it is; the despairing and gloomy soul sees that light in its horizon; star of the interior night. She—this was all the thought of Marius. He dreamed of nothing else; he felt confusedly that his old coat was becoming an impossible coat and that his new coat was becoming an old coat, that his shirts were wearing out, that his hat was wearing out, that his boots were wearing out, that is to say, that his life was wearing out, and he said to himself: "If I could only see her again before I die."

A single sweet idea remained to him, that she had loved him, that her eyes had told him so, that she did not know his name but that she knew his soul, and that, perhaps, where she was, whatever that mysterious place might be, she loved him still. Who knows but she was dreaming of him as he was dreaming of her? Sometimes in the inexplicable hours, such as every heart has which loves, having reasons for sorrow only, yet feeling, nevertheless, a vague thrill of joy, he said to himself: "It is her thoughts which come to me!" Then he added: "My thoughts reach her also, perhaps!"

This illusion, at which he shook his head the moment afterward, succeeded, notwithstanding, in casting some rays into his soul, which occasionally resembled hope. From time to time, especially at that evening hour which saddens dreamers most of all, he dropped upon a quire of paper, which he devoted to that purpose, the purest, the most impersonal, the most ideal of the reveries with which love filled his brain. He called that "writing to her."

We must not suppose that his reason was disordered. Quite the contrary. He had lost the capability of work and of moving firmly toward a definite end, but he was more clear-sighted and correct than ever. Marius saw, in a calm and real light, although a singular one, what was going on under his eyes, even the most indifferent facts or men; he said the right word about everything with a sort of honest languor and candid disinterested-

ness. His judgment, almost detached from hope, soared and floated aloft.

In this situation of mind nothing escaped him, nothing deceived him, and he saw at every moment the bottom of life, humanity, and destiny. Happy, even in anguish, is he to whom God has given a soul worthy of love and of grief! He who has not seen the things of this world and the hearts of men by this double light has seen nothing; and knows nothing of the truth.

The soul which loves and suffers is in the sublime state.

The days passed, however, one after another, and there was nothing new. It seemed to him, merely, that the dreary space which remained for him to run through was contracting with every instant. He thought that he already saw distinctly the brink of the bottomless precipice.

"What!" he repeated to himself, "shall I never see her again?"

If you go up the Rue St. Jacques, leave the barrière at your side and follow the old interior boulevard to the left for some distance, you come to the Rue de la Sainté, then La Glacière, and a little before reaching the small stream of the Gobelins you find a sort of field, which is, in the long and monotonous circuit of the boulevards of Paris, the only spot where Ruysdael would be tempted to sit down.

That indescribable something from which grace springs is there, a green meadow crossed by tight drawn ropes, on which rags are drying in the wind, an old market-garden farm-house built in the time of Louis XIII, with its large roof grotesquely pierced with dormer windows, broken palisade fences, a small pond between the poplars, women, laughter, voices; in the horizon the Pantheon, the tree of the deaf-mutes, the Val de Grâce, black, squat, fantastic, amusing, magnificent, and in the background the severe square summits of the towers of Notre Dame.

As the place is worth seeing nobody goes there. Hardly a cart or a wagon once in a quarter of an hour.

It happened one day that Marius' solitary walks conducted him to this spot near this pond. That day there was a rarity on the boulevard—a passer. Marius, vaguely struck with the almost sylvan charm of the spot, asked this traveler: "What is the name of this place?"

The traveler answered: "It is the Field of the Lark."

And he added: "It was here that Ulbach killed the shepherdess of Ivry."

But after that word, the "Lark," Marius had heard nothing more. There are such sudden congelations in the dreamy state which a word is sufficient to produce. The whole mind condenses abruptly about one idea and ceases to be capable of any other perception.

The Lark was the appellation which, in the depths of Marius' melancholy, had replaced Ursula. "Yes," said he, in the kind of unreasoning stupor peculiar to these mysterious asides, "this is her field. I shall learn here where she lives."

This was absurd, but irresistible.

And he came every day to this Field of the Lark.

II

EMBRYONIC FORMATION OF CRIMES IN THE INCUBATION OF PRISONS

JAVERT'S triumph in the Gorbeau tenement had seemed complete, but it was not so.

In the first place, and this was his principal regret, Javert had not made the prisoner prisoner. The victim who slips away is more suspicious than the assassin; and it was probable that this personage, so precious a capture to the bandits, would be a not less valuable prize to the authorities.

And then Montparnasse had escaped Javert.

He must await another occasion to lay his hand upon "that devilish dandy." Montparnasse, in fact, having met Eponine, who was standing sentry under the trees of the boulevard, had led her away, liking rather to be Né-morin with the daughter than to be Schinderhannes with the father. Well for him that he did so. He was free. As to Eponine, Javert "nabbed" her; trifling consolation. Eponine had rejoined Azelma at Les Madelonnettes.

Finally, on the trip from the Gorbeau tenement to La Force, one of the principal prisoners, Claquesous, had been lost. Nobody knew how it was done; the officers and sergeants "didn't understand it"; he had changed into

vapor; he had glided out of the handcuffs; he had slipped through the cracks of the carriage, the fiacre was leaky, and had fled; nothing could be said, save that on reaching the prison there was no Claquesous. There were either fairies or police in the matter. Had Claquesous melted away into the darkness like a snow-flake in the water? Was there some secret connivance of the officers? Did this man belong to the double enigma of disorder and of order? Was he concentric with infraction and with repression? Had this sphinx fore-paws in crime and hind-paws in authority? Javert in no wise accepted these combinations, and his hair rose on end in view of such an exposure; but his squad contained other inspectors besides himself, more deeply initiated, perhaps, than himself, although his subordinates, in the secrets of the préfecture, and Claquesous was so great a scoundrel that he might be a very good officer. To be on such intimate juggling relations with darkness is excellent for brigandage and admirable for the police. There are such two-edged rascals. However it might be, Claquesous was lost and was not found again. Javert appeared more irritated than astonished at it.

As to Marius, "that dolt of a lawyer," who was "probably frightened" and whose name Javert had forgotten, Javert cared little for him. Besides, he was a lawyer; they are always found again. But was he a lawyer merely? The trial commenced.

The police judge thought it desirable not to put one of the men of the Patron Minette band into solitary confinement, hoping for some blabbing. This was Brujon, the long-haired man of the Rue du Petit Banquier. He was left in the Charlemagne court and the watchmen kept their eyes upon him.

This name, Brujon, is one of the traditions of La Force. In the hideous court called the Batiment Neuf, which the administration named Court St. Bernard and which the robbers named La Fosse aux Lions, upon that wall, covered with filth and with mould, which rises on the left to the height of the roofs, near an old rusty iron door which leads into the former chapel of the ducal hotel of La Force, now become a dormitory for brigands, a dozen years ago there could still be seen a sort of bastille coarsely

cut in the stone with a nail and below it this signature: "Brujon, 1811."

The Brujon of 1811 was the father of the Brujon of 1832.

This last, of whom only a glimpse was caught in the Gorbeau ambushade, was a sprightly young fellow, very cunning and very adroit, with a flurried and plaintive appearance. It was on account of this flurried air that the judge had selected him, thinking that he would be of more use in the Charlemagne court than in a solitary cell.

Robbers do not cease operations because they are in the hands of justice. They are not disconcerted so easily. Being in prison for one crime does not prevent the commencement of another crime. They are artists who have a picture in the parlor and who labor none the less for that on a new work in their studio.

Brujon seemed stupefied by the prison. He was sometimes seen whole hours in the Charlemagne court, standing near the sutler's window, and staring like an idiot at that dirty list of prices of supplies which began with: *garlic, 62 centimes*, and ended with: *cigars, cinq centimes*. Or, instead, he would pass his time in trembling and making his teeth chatter, saying that he had a fever and inquiring if one of the twenty-eight beds in the fever ward was not vacant.

Suddenly, about the second fortnight in February, 1832, it was discovered that Brujon, that sleepy fellow, had sent out, through the agents of the house, not in his own name, but in the name of three of his comrades, three different commissions, which had cost him in all fifty sous, a tremendous expense, which attracted the attention of the prison brigadier.

He inquired into it, and, by consulting the price list of commissions hung up in the convicts' waiting-room, he found that the fifty sous were made up thus: three commissions; one to the Pantheon, ten sous; one to the Val de Grâce, fifteen sous, and one to the Barrière de Grenelle, twenty-five sous. This was the dearest of the whole list. Now, the Pantheon, the Val de Grâce, and the Barrière de Grenelle happened to be the residences of the three most dreaded prowlers of the barrières, Kruideniers, alias Bizzaro, Glorieux, a liberated convict, and Barre Carosse,

upon whom this incident fixed the eyes of the police. They thought they divined that these men were affiliated with Patron Minette, two of whose chiefs—Babet and Gueulemer—were secured. It was supposed that Brujon's messages sent, not addressed to any houses, but to persons who were waiting for them in the street, must have been notices of some projected crime. There were still other indications. They arrested the three prowlers and thought they had foiled Brujon's machination, whatever it was.

About a week after these measures were taken, one night, a watchman who was watching the dormitory in the lower part of the new building, at the instant of putting his chestnut into the chestnut-box—this is the means employed to make sure that the watchmen do their duty with exactness; every hour a chestnut must fall into every box nailed on the doors of the dormitories—a watchman, then, saw through the peep-hole of the dormitory Brujon sitting up in his bed and writing something by the light of the reflector. The warden entered, Brujon was put into the dungeon for a month, but they could not find what he had written. The police knew nothing more.

It is certain, however, that the next day "a postilion" was thrown from the Charlemagne court into the Fosse aux Lions, over the five-story building which separates the two courts.

Prisoners call a ball of bread artistically kneaded, which is sent "into Ireland"—that is to say, over the roof of a prison, from one court to the other—a postilion: over England; from one country to the other; "into Ireland." This ball falls in the court. He who picks it up opens it and finds a letter in it addressed to some prisoner in the court. If it be a convict who finds it he hands the letter to its destination; if it be a warden, or one of those secretly bribed prisoners who are called sheep in the prisons and foxes in the galleys, the letter is carried to the office and delivered to the police.

This time the postilion reached its address, although he for whom the message was destined was then "in solitary." Its recipient was none other than Babet, one of the four heads of Patron Minette.

The postilion contained a paper rolled up, on which there were only these two lines:

"Babet, there is an affair on hand in the Rue Plumet. A grating in a garden."

This was the thing that Brujon had written in the night.

In spite of spies, both male and female, Babet found means to send the letter from La Force to La Salpêtrière to "a friend" of his who was shut up there. This girl in her turn transmitted the letter to another whom she knew, named Magnon, who was closely watched by the police, but not yet arrested. This Magnon, whose name the reader has already seen, had some relations with the Thenardiers, which will be related hereafter, and could, by going to see Eponine, serve as a bridge between La Salpêtrière and Les Madelonnettes.

It happened just at that very moment, the proofs in the prosecution of Thenardier failing in regard to his daughters, that Eponine and Azelma were released.

When Eponine came out, Magnon, who was watching for her at the door of Les Madelonnettes, handed her Brujon's note to Babet, charging her to find out about the affair.

Eponine went to the Rue Plumet, reconnoitred the grating and the garden, looked at the house, spied, watched, and, a few days after, carried to Magnon, who lived in the Rue Clocheperce, a biscuit, which Magnon transmitted to Babet's mistress at La Salpêtrière. A biscuit, in the dark symbolism of the prison, signifies "nothing to do."

So that in less than a week after that, Babet and Brujon, meeting on the way from La Force as one was going "to examination" and the other was returning from it:

"Well," asked Brujon, "the Rue P?"

"Biscuit," answered Babet.

This was the end of that fetus of crime engendered by Brujon in La Force.

This abortion, however, led to results entirely foreign to Brujon's programme. We shall see them.

Often, when thinking to knot one thread, we tie another.

III

AN APPARITION TO FATHER MABEUF

MARIUS now visited nobody, but he sometimes happened to meet Father Mabeuf.

While Marius was slowly descending those dismal steps, which one might call cellar-stairs and which lead into places without light, where we hear the happy walking above us, M. Mabeuf also was descending.

The "Flora of Caunteretz" had absolutely no sale more. The experiments upon indigo had not succeeded in the little garden of Austerlitz, which was very much exposed. M. Mabeuf could only cultivate a few rare plants which like moisture and shade. He was not discouraged, however. He had obtained a bit of ground in the Jardin des Plantes, with a good exposure, to carry on, "at his own cost," his experiments upon indigo. For this he had put the plates of his "Flora" into pawn. He had reduced his breakfast to two eggs, and he left one of them for his old servant, whose wages he had not paid for fifteen months. And often his breakfast was his only meal. He laughed no more with his child-like laugh; he had become morose, and he now received no visits. Marius was right in not thinking to come. Sometimes, at the hour when M. Mabeuf went to the Jardin des Plantes, the old man and the young man met on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. They did not speak, but sadly nodded their heads. It is a bitter thing that there should be a moment when misery unbinds! They had been two friends—they were two passers.

The bookseller, Royol, was dead. M. Mabeuf now knew only his books, his garden, and his indigo; those were to him the three forms which happiness, pleasure, and hope had taken. This fed his life. He said to himself: "When I have made my blue balls I shall be rich: I will take my plates out of pawn; I will bring my 'Flora' into vogue through charlatanism, by big payments and by announcements in the journals, and I will buy—I well know where—a copy of Pierre de Medine's 'Art de Naviguer,' with wood-cuts, edition of 1559." In the meantime he worked all day on his indigo ball, and at night returned

home to water his garden and read his books. M. Mabeuf was at this time very nearly eighty years old.

One night he saw a singular apparition.

He had come home while it was still broad day. Mother Plutarch, whose health was poor, was sick and gone to bed. He had dined on a bone on which a little meat was left and a bit of bread which he had found on the kitchen table, and had sat down on a block of stone, which took the place of a seat in his garden.

Near this seat there rose, in the fashion of the old orchard gardens, a sort of hut in a ruinous condition, of joists and boards, a warren on the ground floor, a fruit-house above. There were no rabbits in the warren, but there were a few apples in the fruit-house. A remnant of the winter's store.

M. Mabeuf had begun to look through, reading by the way, with the help of his spectacles, two books which enchanted him, and in which he was even absorbed, a more serious thing at his age. His natural timidity fitted him, to a certain extent, to accept superstitions. The first of these books was the famous treatise of President Delancré "On the Inconstancy of Demons," the other was the quarto of Mutor de la Rubandiesse "On the Devils of Vauvert and the Goblins of La Bièvre." This last book interested him the more since his garden was one of the spots formerly haunted by goblins. Twilight was beginning to whiten all above and to blacken all below. As he read, Father Mabeuf was looking over the book which he held in his hand, at his plants, among others at a magnificent rhododendron, which was one of his consolations: there had been four days of drought, wind and sun, without a drop of rain; the stalks bent over, the buds hung down, the leaves were falling, they all needed to be watered: the rhododendron especially was a sad sight. Father Mabeuf was one of those to whom plants have souls. The old man had worked all day on his indigo bed, he was exhausted with fatigue; he got up, nevertheless, put his books upon the bench and walked, bent over and with tottering steps, to the well, but when he had grasped the chain he could not even draw it far enough to unhook it. Then he turned and looked with a look of anguish toward the sky which was filling with stars.

The evening had that serenity which buries the sorrows

of man under a strangely dreary yet eternal joy. The night promised to be as dry as the day had been.

"Stars everywhere!" thought the old man; "not the smallest cloud! not a drop of water."

And his head, which had been raised for a moment, fell back upon his breast.

He raised it again and looked at the sky, murmuring:

"A drop of dew! a little pity!"

He endeavored once more to unhook the well chain, but he could not.

At this moment he heard a voice which said:

"Father Mabeuf, would you like to have me water your garden?"

At the same time he heard a sound like that of a passing deer in the hedge, and he saw springing out of the shrubbery a sort of tall, slender girl, who came and stood before him, looking boldly at him. She had less the appearance of a human being than of a form which had just been born of the twilight.

Before Father Mabeuf, who was easily startled, and who was, as we have said, subject to fear, could answer a word, this being, whose motions seemed grotesquely abrupt in the obscurity, had unhooked the chain, plunged in and drawn out the bucket, and filled the watering-pot, and the good man saw this apparition with bare feet and a ragged skirt running along the beds, distributing life about her. The sound of the water upon the leaves filled Father Mabeuf's soul with transport. It seemed to him that now the rhododendron was happy.

When the first bucket was emptied the girl drew a second, then a third. She watered the whole garden.

Moving thus along the walks, her outline appearing entirely black, shaking her torn shawl over her long, angular arms, she seemed something like a bat.

When she had ended, Father Mabeuf approached her with tears in his eyes and laid his hand upon her forehead.

"God will bless you," said he; "you are an angel, since you care for flowers."

"No," she answered, "I am the devil, but that is all the same to me."

The old man exclaimed, without waiting for and without hearing her answer:

"What a pity that I am so unfortunate and so poor and that I can not do anything for you!"

"You can do something," said she.

"What?"

"Tell me where M. Marius lives."

The old man did not understand.

"What M. Marius?"

His raised his glassy eye and appeared to be looking for something that had vanished.

"A young man who used to come here."

Meanwhile M. Mabeuf had fumbled in his memory.

"Ah! yes," he exclaimed; "I know what you mean. Listen, now! M. Marius—the Baron Marius Pontmercy, yes! He lives—or rather he does not live there now—ah! well, I don't know."

While he spoke, he had bent over to tie up a branch of the rhododendron, and he continued:

"Ah! I remember now. He passes up the boulevard very often and goes toward La Glacière, Rue Croulebarbe. The Field of the Lark. Go that way. He isn't hard to find."

When M. Mabeuf rose up there was nobody there; the girl had disappeared.

He was decidedly a little frightened.

"Really," thought he, "if my garden was not watered, I should think it was a spirit."

An hour later when he had gone to bed, this returned to him, and, as he was falling asleep, at that troubled moment when thought, like that fabulous bird which changes itself into fish to pass through the sea, gradually takes the form of dream to pass through sleep, he said to himself confusedly:

"Indeed, this much resembles what Rubaudière relates of the goblins. Could it be a goblin?"

IV

AN APPARITION TO MARIUS

A FEW days after this visit of a "spirit" to Father Mabeuf, one morning—it was Monday, the day on which Marius borrowed the 100-sou piece of Courfeyrac for Thenardier—Marius had put this 100-sou piece into his pocket, and, before carrying it to the prison office, he had gone

"to take a little walk," hoping that it would enable him to work on his return. It was eternally so. As soon as he rose in the morning, he sat down before a book and a sheet of paper to work upon some translation; the work he had on hand at that time was the translation into French of a celebrated quarrel between two Germans, the controversy between Gans and Savigny; he took Savigny, he took Gans, read four lines, tried to write one of them, could not, saw a star between his paper and his eyes, and rose from his chair, saying: "I will go out. That will put me in trim."

And he would go to the Field of the Lark.

There he saw the star more than ever and Savigny and Gans less than ever.

He returned, tried to resume his work, and did not succeed; he found no means of tying a single one of the broken threads in his brain; then he would say: "I will not go out to-morrow. It prevents my working." Yet he went out every day.

He lived in the Field of the Lark rather than in Courfeyrac's room. This was his real address: Boulevard de la Santé, seventh tree from the Rue Croulebarbe.

That morning he had left this seventh tree and sat down on the bank of the brook of the Gobelins. The bright sun was gleaming through the new and glossy leaves.

He was thinking of "Her!" And his dreaminess, becoming reproachful, fell back upon himself; he thought sorrowfully of the idleness, the paralysis of the soul, which was growing up within him, and of that night which was thickening before him hour by hour so rapidly that he had already ceased to see the sun.

Meanwhile, through this painful evolution of indistinct ideas which were not even a soliloquy—so much had action become enfeebled within him, and he no longer had even the strength to develop his grief—through this melancholy distraction the sensations of the world without reached him. He heard behind and below him, on both banks of the stream, the washerwomen of the Gobelins beating their linen; and over his head, the birds chattering and singing in the elms. On the one hand the sound of liberty, of happy unconcern, of winged leisure; on the other, the sound of labor. A thing which made him muse

profoundly and almost reflect these two joyous sounds. All at once, in the midst of his ecstasy of exhaustion, he heard a voice which was known to him say:

"Ah! there he is!"

He raised his eyes and recognized the unfortunate child who had come to his room one morning, the elder of the Thenardier girls, Eponine; he now knew her name. Singular fact, she had become more wretched and more beautiful, two steps which seemed impossible. She had accomplished a double progress toward the light and toward distress. She was barefooted and in rags, as on the day when she had so resolutely entered his room, only her rags were two months older; the holes were larger, the tatters dirtier. It was the same rough voice, the same forehead tanned and wrinkled by exposure; the same free, wild and wandering gaze. She had, in addition to her former expression, that mixture of fear and sorrow which the experience of a prison adds to misery.

She had spears of straw and grass in her hair, not like Ophelia from having gone mad through the contagion of Hamlet's madness, but because she had slept in some stable loft.

And with all this she was beautiful. What a star thou art, O youth!

Meantime she had stopped before Marius with an expression of pleasure upon her livid face and something which resembled a smile.

She stood for a few seconds as if she could not speak:

"I have found you, then?" said she at last. "Father Mabeuf was right; it was on this boulevard. How I have looked for you! if you only knew? Do you know? I have been in the jug. A fortnight! They have let me out! seeing that there was nothing against me, and then I was not of the age of discernment. It lacked two months. Oh! how I have looked for you! it is six weeks now. You don't live down there any longer?"

"No," said Marius.

"Oh! I understand. On account of the affair. Such scares are disagreeable. You have moved. What! why do you wear such an old hat as that? a young man like you ought to have fine clothes. Do you know, M. Marius, Father Mabeuf calls you Baron Marius; I forget what

more. It's not true that you are a baron? Barons are old fellows; they go to the Luxembourg in front of the château, where there is the most sun, they read the 'Quotidienne' for a sou. I went once for a letter to a baron's like that. He was more than one hundred years old. But tell me, where do you live now?"

Marius did not answer.

"Ah!" she continued, "you have a hole in your shirt. I must mend it for you."

She resumed with an expression which gradually grew darker:

"You don't seem to be glad to see me?"

Marius said nothing; she herself was silent for a moment, then exclaimed:

"But if I would, I could easily make you glad!"

"How?" inquired Marius. "What does that mean?"

"Ah! you used to speak more kindly to me!" replied she.

"Well, what is it that you mean?"

She bit her lip; she seemed to hesitate, as if passing through a kind of interior struggle. At last, she appeared to decide upon her course.

"So much the worse; it makes no difference. You look sad, I want you to be glad. But promise me that you will laugh; I want to see you laugh and hear you say: 'Ah, well! that is good.' Poor M. Marius! you know, you promised me that you would give me whatever I should ask—"

"Yes! but tell me!"

She looked into Marius' eyes and said:

"I have the address."

Marius turned pale. All his blood flowed back to his heart.

"What address?"

"The address you asked me for!"

She added, as if she were making an effort: "The address—you know well enough!"

"Yes!" stammered Marius.

"Of the young lady!"

Having pronounced this word, she sighed deeply.

Marius sprang up from the bank on which he was sitting, and took her wildly by the hand.

"Oh! come! show me the way, tell me! ask me for whatever you will! Where is it?"

"Come with me," she answered. "I am not sure of the street and the number; it is away on the other side from here, but I know the house very well. I will show you."

She withdrew her hand and added in a tone which would have pierced the heart of an observer, but which did not even touch the intoxicated and transported Marius:

"Oh, how glad you are!"

A cloud passed over Marius' brow. He seized Eponine by the arm.

"Swear to me one thing!"

"Swear!" said she; "what does that mean? Ah! you want me to swear?"

And she laughed.

"Your father! promise me, Eponine—swear to me that you will not give this address to your father!"

She turned toward him with an astounded appearance.

"Eponine! How do you know that my name is Eponine?"

"Promise what I ask you!"

But she did not seem to understand.

"That is nice! you called me Eponine!"

Marius caught her by both arms at once.

"But answer me now, in Heaven's name! pay attention to what I am saying; swear to me that you will not give the address you know to your father!"

"My father?" said she. "Oh, yes, my father! Do not be concerned on his account. He is in solitary. Besides, do I busy myself about my father?"

"But you don't promise me!" exclaimed Marius.

"Let me go, then!" said she, bursting into a laugh; "how you shake me! Yes, yes! I promise you that! I swear to you that! What is it to me? I won't give the address to my father. There, will that do? Is that it?"

"Nor to anybody?" said Marius.

"Nor to anybody."

"Now," added Marius, "show me the way."

"Right away?"

"Right away."

"Come. Oh, how glad he is!" said she.

After a few steps she stopped.

"You follow too near me. M. Marius. Let me go forward and follow me like that without seeming to. It

won't do for a fine young man like you to be seen with a woman like me."

No tongue could tell all that there was in that word woman, thus uttered by this child.

She went on a few steps and stopped again; Marius rejoined her. She spoke to him aside and without turning.

"By the way—you know you have promised me something?"

Marius fumbled in his pocket. He had nothing in the world but the five francs intended for Thenardier. He took it and put it into Eponine's hand.

She opened her fingers and let the piece fall on the ground, and, looking at him with a gloomy look: "I don't want your money," said she.

BOOK THIRD—THE HOUSE IN THE RUE PLUMET

I

THE SECRET HOUSE

TOWARD the middle of the last century a velvet-capped president of the Parliament of Paris, having a mistress and concealing it, for in those days the great lords exhibited their mistresses and the bourgeois concealed theirs, had *une petite maison* built in the Faubourg St. Germain, in the deserted Rue de Blomet, now called the Rue Plumet, not far from the spot which then went by the name of the Combat des Animaux.

This was a summer-house of but two stories, two rooms on the ground floor, two chambers in the second story, a kitchen below, a boudoir above, a garret next the roof, the whole fronted by a garden with a large iron grated gate opening on the street. This garden contained about an acre. This was all that the passers-by could see; but in the rear of the house there was a small yard, at the further end of which there was a low building, two rooms only and a cellar, a convenience intended to conceal a child and nurse in case of need. This building communicated, from the rear, by a masked door opening secretly, with a long,

narrow passage, paved, winding, open to the sky, bordered by two high walls, and which, concealed with wonderful art, and, as if it were lost between the inclosures of the gardens and fields, all the corners and turnings of which it followed, came to an end at another door, also concealed, which opened a third of a mile away, almost in another *quartier*, upon the unbuilt end of the Rue de Babylone.

The president came in this way, so that those even who might have watched and followed him, and those who might have observed that the president went somewhere mysteriously every day, could not have suspected that going to the Rue de Babylone was going to the Rue de Blomet. By skilful purchases of land, the ingenious magistrate was enabled to have this secret route to his house made upon his own ground, and consequently without supervision. He had afterward sold off the lots of ground bordering on the passage in little parcels for flower and vegetable gardens, and the proprietors of these lots of ground supposed on both sides that what they saw was a partition wall, and did not even suspect the existence of that long ribbon of pavement winding between two walls among their beds and fruit trees. The birds alone saw this curiosity. It is probable that the larks and the sparrows of the last century had a good deal of chattering about the president.

The house, built of stone in the Mansard style, wainscoted and furnished in the Watteau style, rock-work within, peruke without, walled about with a triple hedge of flowers, had a discreet, coquettish, and solemn appearance about it, suitable to a caprice of love and magistracy.

This house and this passage, which have since disappeared, were still in existence fifteen years ago. In '93 a coppersmith bought the house to pull it down, but, not being able to pay the price for it, the nation sent him into bankruptcy. So that it was the house that pulled down the coppersmith. Thereafter the house remained empty, and fell slowly into ruin, like all dwellings to which the presence of man no longer communicates life. It remained furnished with its old furniture, and always for sale or to let, and the ten or twelve persons who passed through the Rue Plumet in the course of a year were noti-

fied of this by a yellow and illegible piece of paper which had hung upon the railing of the garden since 1810.

Toward the end of the Restoration these same passers might have noticed that the paper had disappeared, and that, also, the shutters of the upper story were open. The house was, indeed, occupied. The windows had "little curtains," a sign that there was a woman there.

In the month of October, 1829, a man of a certain age had appeared and hired the house as it stood, including, of course, the building in the rear and the passage which ran out to the Rue de Babylone. He had the secret openings of these two doors of this passage repaired. The house, as we have just said, was still nearly furnished with the president's old furniture. The new tenant had ordered a few repairs, added here and there what was lacking, put in a few flags in the yard, a few bricks in the basement, a few steps in the staircase, a few tiles in the floor, a few panes in the windows, and finally came and installed himself with a young girl and an aged servant, without any noise, rather like somebody stealing in than like a man who enters his own house. The neighbors did not gossip about it, for the reason that there were no neighbors.

This tenant, to partial extent, was Jean Valjean; the young girl was Cosette. The servant was a spinster named Toussaint, whom Jean Valjean had saved from the hospital and misery, and who was old, stuttering, and a native of a province, three qualities which had determined Jean Valjean to take her with him. He hired the house under the name of M. Fauchelevent, gentleman. In what has been related hitherto, the reader doubtless recognized Jean Valjean even before Thenardier did.

Why had Jean Valjean left the convent of the Petit Picpus? What had happened?

Nothing had happened.

As we remember, Jean Valjean was happy in the convent, so happy that his conscience at last began to be troubled. He saw Cosette every day, he felt paternity springing up and developing within him more and more, he brooded this child with his soul, he said to himself that she was his, that nothing could take her from him, that this would be so indefinitely, that certainly she would become a nun, being every day gently led on toward it, that

thus the convent was henceforth the universe to her as well as to him, that he would grow old there and she would grow up there, that she would grow old there and he would die there; that finally—ravishing hope—no separation was possible. In reflecting upon this he at last began to find difficulties. He questioned himself. He asked himself if all this happiness were really his own, if it were not made up of the happiness of another, of the happiness of the child whom he was appropriating and plundering, he, an old man; if this was not a robbery? He said to himself that this child had a right to know what life was before renouncing it; that to cut her off in advance, and in some sort without consulting her, from all pleasure, under pretence of saving her from all trial, to take advantage of her ignorance and isolation to give her an artificial vocation was to outrage a human creature and to lie to God. And who knows but, thinking over all this some day, and being a nun with regret, Cosette might come to hate him? a final thought, which was almost selfish and less heroic than the others, but which was insupportable to him. He resolved to leave the convent.

He resolved it, he recognized with despair that it must be done. As to objections there were none. Five years of sojourn between those four walls, and of absence from among men, had necessarily destroyed or dispersed the elements of alarm. He might return tranquilly among men. He had grown old and all had changed. Who would recognize him now? And then, to look at the worst, there was no danger save for himself, and he had no right to condemn Cosette to the cloister for the reason that he had been condemned to the galleys. What, moreover, is danger in presence of duty? Finally, nothing prevented him from being prudent and taking proper precautions.

As to Cosette's education, it was almost finished and complete.

His determination once formed, he awaited an opportunity. It was not slow to present itself. Old Fauchelevent died.

Jean Valjean asked an audience of the reverend prioress and told her that, having received a small inheritance on the death of his brother, which enabled him to live henceforth without labor, he would leave the service of the con-

vent and take away his daughter; but that, as it was not just that Cosette, not taking her vows, should have been educated gratuitously, he humbly begged the reverend prioress to allow him to offer the community, as an indemnity for the five years which Cosette had passed there, the sum of 5,000 francs.

Thus Jean Valjean left the Convent of the Perpetual Adoration.

On leaving the convent he took in his own hands, and would not intrust to any assistant, the little box, the key of which he always had about him. This box puzzled Cosette, on account of the odor of embalming which came from it.

Let us say at once that henceforth this box never left him more. He always had it in his room. It was the first, and sometimes the only, thing that he carried away in his changes of abode. Cosette laughed about it and called this box "the inseparable," saying: "I am jealous of it."

Jean Valjean, nevertheless, did not appear again in the open city without deep anxiety.

He discovered the house in the Rue Plumet and buried himself in it. He was henceforth in possession of the name of *Ultimus Fauchelevant*.

At the same time he hired two other lodgings in Paris, in order to attract less attention than if he always remained in the same quartier, to be able to change his abode on occasion at the slightest anxiety which he might feel, and, finally, that he might not again find himself in such a strait as on the night when he had so miraculously escaped from Javert. These two lodgings were two very humble dwellings, and of a poor appearance, in two quartiers widely distant from each other—one in the Rue de l'Ouest, the other in the Rue de l'Homme Armé.

He went from time to time now to the Rue de l'Homme Armé, and now to the Rue de l'Ouest, to spend a month or six weeks with Cosette, without taking Toussaint. He was waited upon by the porters and gave himself out as a man of some means of the suburbs, having a foothold in the city. This lofty virtue had three domiciles in Paris in order to escape from the police.

II

JEAN VALJEAN A NATIONAL GUARD

STILL, properly speaking, he lived in the Rue Plumet, and he had ordered his life there in the following manner:

Cosette with the servant occupied the house; she had the large bedroom with painted piers, the boudoir with gilded moldings, the president's parlor furnished with tapestry and huge arm-chairs; she had the garden. Jean Valjean had a bed put into Cosette's chamber with a canopy of antique damask in three colors, and an old and beautiful Persian carpet, bought at Mother Gaucher's in the Rue du Figuier St. Paul, and, to soften the severity of these magnificent relics, he had added to this little curiosity-shop all the little lively and graceful pieces of furniture used by young girls, an étagère, a bookcase and gilt books, a writing-case, a blotting-case, a work-table inlaid with pearls, a silver-gilt dressing-case, a dressing-table in Japan porcelain. Long damask curtains of three colors on a red ground, matching those of the bed, hung at the second-story windows. On the first floor tapestry curtains. All winter Cosette's petite maison was warmed from top to bottom. For his part, he lived in the sort of porter's lodge in the back yard, with a mattress on a cot bedstead, a white wood table, two straw chairs, an earthen water pitcher, a few books upon a board, his dear box in a corner, never any fire. He dined with Cosette and there was a black loaf on the table for him. He said to Tous-saint, when she entered their service: "Mademoiselle is the mistress of the house." "And you, m—monsieur?" replied Toussaint, astounded. "Me, I am much better than the master, I am the father."

Cosette had been trained to housekeeping in the convent, and she regulated the expenses, which were very moderate. Every day Jean Valjean took Cosette's arm and went to walk with her. They went to the least frequented walk of the Luxembourg, and every Sunday to Mass, always at St. Jacques du Haut Pas, because it was quite distant. As that is a very poor quartier, he gave

much alms there, and the unfortunate surrounded him in the church, which had given him the title of the superscription of the epistle of the Thenardiens: "To the benevolent gentleman of the Church of St. Jacques du Haut Pas." He was fond of taking Cosette to visit the needy and the sick. No stranger came into the house in the Rue Plumet. Toussaint bought the provisions, and Jean Valjean himself went after the water to a watering trough which was near by on the boulevard. They kept the wood and wine in a kind of semi-subterranean vault covered with rock-work, which was near the door on the Rue de Babylone, and which had formerly served the president as a grotto; for, in the time of the Follies and the petites maisons, there was no love without a grotto.

There was on the Rue de Babylone door a box for letters and papers; but the three occupants of the summer-house on the Rue Plumet receiving neither papers nor letters, the entire use of the box, formerly the agent of amours and the confidant of a legal spark, was now limited to the notices of the receiver of taxes and the guard warnings. For M. Fauchelevent belonged to the national guard; he had not been able to escape the close meshes of the enrolment of 1831. The municipal investigation made at that time had extended even to the convent of the Petit Picpus, a sort of impenetrable and holy cloud from which Jean Valjean had come forth venerable in the eyes of his magistracy, and, in consequence, worthy of mounting guard.

Three or four times a year Jean Valjean donned his uniform, and performed his duties, very willingly, moreover; it was a good disguise for him, which associated him with everybody else while leaving him solitary. Jean Valjean had completed his sixtieth year, the age of legal exemption; but he did not appear more than fifty; moreover, he had no desire to escape from his sergeant-major and to cavil with the Count de Lobau. He had no civil standing; he was concealing his name, he was concealing his identity, he was concealing his age, he was concealing everything; and, we have just said, he was very willingly a national guard. To resemble the crowd who pay their taxes, this was his whole ambition. This man had for his ideal within, the angel—without, the bourgeois.

We must note one incident, however. When Jean Valjean went out with Cosette, he dressed as we have seen, and had much the air of an old officer. When he went out alone, and this was most usually in the evening, he was always clad in the waistcoat and trousers of a workingman, and wore a cap which hid his face. Was this precaution or humility? Both at once. Cosette was accustomed to the enigmatic aspect of her destiny, and hardly noticed her father's singularities. As for Toussaint, she venerated Jean Valjean, and thought everything good that he did. One day her butcher, who had caught sight of Jean Valjean, said to her: "That is a funny body." She answered: "He is a s-saint!"

Neither Jean Valjean nor Cosette nor Toussaint ever came in or went out except by the gate on the Rue de Babylone. Unless one had seen them through the grated gate of the garden it would have been difficult to guess that they lived in the Rue Plumet. This gate always remained closed. Jean Valjean had left the garden uncultivated, that it might not attract attention.

In this he deceived himself, perhaps.

III

FOLIIS AC FRONDIBUS

THIS garden, thus abandoned to itself for more than half a century, had become very strange and very pleasant. The passers-by of forty years ago stopped in the street to look at it, without suspecting the secrets which it concealed behind its fresh green thickets. More than one dreamer of that day has many a time allowed his eyes and his thoughts indiscreetly to penetrate through the bars of the ancient gate which was padlocked, twisted, tottering; secured by two green and mossy pillars, and grotesquely crowned with a pediment of indecipherable arabesque.

There was a stone seat in a corner, one or two mouldy statues, some trellises loosened by time and rotting upon the wall; no walks, moreover, nor turf; dog-grass everywhere. Horticulture had departed and nature had re-

turned. Weeds were abundant, a wonderful hap for a poor bit of earth. The heyday of the gilliflowers was splendid. Nothing in this garden opposed the sacred effort of things toward life; venerable growth was at home there. The trees bent over toward the briars, the briars mounted toward the trees, the shrub had climbed, the branch had bowed, that which runs upon the ground had attempted to find that which blooms in the air, that which floats in the wind had stooped toward that which trails in the moss; trunks, branches, leaves, twigs, tufts, tendrils, shoots, thorns, were mingled, crossed, married, confounded; vegetation, in a close and strong embrace, had celebrated and accomplished there under the satisfied eye of the Creator, in this inclosure of 300 feet square, the sacred mystery of its fraternity, symbol of human fraternity. The garden was no longer a garden; it was a colossal bush, that is to say, something which is as impenetrable as a forest, populous as a city, tremulous as a nest, dark as a cathedral, odorous as a bouquet, solitary as a tomb, full of life as a multitude.

In floréal, this enamorous shrub, free behind its grating and within its four walls, warmed into the deep labor of universal germination, thrilled at the rising sun almost like a stag which inhales the air of universal love and feels the April sap mounting and boiling in his veins, and shaking its immense green antlers in the wind, scattered over the moist ground, over the broken statues, over the sinking staircase of the summer-house, and even over the pavement of the deserted street, flowers in stars, dew in pearls, fecundity, beauty, life, joy, perfume. At noon a thousand white butterflies took refuge in it, and it was a heavenly sight to see this living snow of summer whirling about in flakes in the shade. There, in this gay darkness of verdure, a multitude of innocent voices spoke softly to the soul, and what the warbling had forgotten to say the humming completed. At night a dreamy vapor arose from the garden and wrapped it around; a shroud of mist, a calm and celestial sadness, covered it; the intoxicating odor of honeysuckles and bindweed rose on all sides like an exquisite and subtle poison; you heard the last appeals of the woodpecker and the wagtails drowsing under the branches; you felt the sacred intimacy of bird and tree; by day the wings

rejoiced the leaves; by night the leaves protected the wings.

In winter the bush was black, wet, bristling, shivering, and let the house be seen in part. You perceived, instead of the flowers in the branches and the dew in the flowers, the long silver ribbons of the snails upon the thick and cold carpet of yellow leaves; but in every way, under every aspect, in every season—spring, winter, summer, autumn—this little inclosure exhaled melancholy, contemplation, solitude, liberty, the absence of man, the presence of God; and the old rusty grating appeared to say: "This garden is mine!"

In vain was the pavement of Paris all about it, the classic and splendid residences of the Rue de Varennes within a few steps, the dome of the Invalides quite near, the Chamber of Deputies not far off; in vain did the carriages of the Rue de Bourgogne and the Rue St. Dominique roll pompously in its neighborhood; in vain did the yellow, brown, white, and red omnibuses pass each other in the adjoining square; the Rue Plumet was a solitude; and the death of the old proprietors, the passage of a revolution, the downfall of ancient fortunes, absence, oblivion, forty years of abandonment and of widowhood, had sufficed to call back into this privileged place the ferns, the mulleins, the hemlocks, the milfoils, the tall weeds, the great flaunting plants with large leaves of a pale greenish drab, the lizards, the beetles, the restless and rapid insects; to bring out of the depths of the earth, and display within these four walls, an indescribably wild and savage grandeur; and that nature, who disavows the mean arrangements of man, and who always gives her whole self where she gives herself at all, as well as in the ant as in the eagle, should come to display herself in a poor little Parisian garden with as much severity and majesty as in a virgin forest of the new world.

Nothing is really small; whoever is open to the deep penetration of nature knows this. Although, indeed, no absolute satisfaction may be vouchsafed to philosophy, no more in circumscribing the cause than in limiting the effect, the contemplator falls into unfathomable ecstasies in view of all these decompositions of forces resulting in unity. All works for all.

Algebra applies to the clouds; the radiance of the star benefits the rose; no thinker would dare to say that the perfume of the hawthorn is useless to the constellations. Who, then, can calculate the path of the molecule? How do we know that the creations of worlds are not determined by the fall of grains of sand? Who, then, understands the reciprocal flux and reflux of the infinitely great and the infinitely small, the echoing of causes in the abysses of being, and the avalanches of creation? A flesh-worm is of account; the small is great, the great is small; all is in equilibrium in necessity; fearful vision for the mind. There are marvelous relations between being and things; in this inexhaustible whole, from sun to grub, there is no scorn; all need each other. Light does not carry terrestrial perfumes into the azure depths without knowing what it does with them; night distributes the stellar essence to the sleeping plants. Every bird which flies has the thread of the infinite in its claw. Germination includes the hatching of a meteor and the tap of a swallow's bill breaking the egg, and it leads forward the birth of an earthworm and the advent of Socrates. Where the telescope ends, the microscope begins. Which of the two has the grander view? Choose. A bit of mould is a pleiad of flowers; a nebula is an ant-hill of stars. The same promiscuity, and still more wonderful, between the things of the intellect and the things of matter. Elements and principles are mingled, combined, espoused, multiplied one by another, to such a degree as to bring the material world and the moral world into the same light. Phenomena are perpetually folded back upon themselves. In the vast cosmical changes the universal life comes and goes in unknown quantities, rolling all in the invisible mystery of the emanations, losing no dream from no single sleep, sowing an animalcule here, crumbling a star there, oscillating and winding, making a force of light and an element of thought, disseminated and indivisible, dissolving all save that geometrical point, the me; reducing everything to the soul-atom; making everything blossom into God; entangling, from the highest to the lowest, all activities in the obscurity of a dizzying mechanism, hanging the flight of an insect upon the movement of the earth, subordinating, who knows? Were it only by the identity of the law, the evolution of the comet

in the firmament to the circling of the infusoria in the drop of water. A machine made of mind. Enormous gearing, whose first motor is the gnat and whose last wheel is the zodiac.

IV

CHANGE OF GRATING

IT seemed as if this garden, first made to conceal licentious mysteries, had been transformed and rendered fit for the shelter of chaste mysteries. There were no longer in it either bowers, or lawns, or arbors, or grottoes; there was a magnificent disheveled obscurity falling like a veil upon all sides. Paphos had become Eden again. Some secret repentance had purified this retreat. This flower-girl now offered flowers to the soul. This coquettish garden, once so very free, had returned to virginity and modesty. A president, assisted by a gardener, a good man who thought he was a second Lamoignon, and another good man who thought he was a second Lenôtre, had distorted it, pruned it, crumpled it, bedizened it, fashioned it for gallantry; nature had taken it again, had filled it with shade and had arranged it for love.

There was also in this solitude a heart which was all ready. Love had only to show himself; there was a temple there composed of verdure, of grass, of moss, of the sighs of birds, of soft shade, of agitated branches, and a soul made up of gentleness, of faith, of candor, of hope, of aspiration and of illusion.

Cosette had left the convent still almost a child; she was a little more than fourteen years old, and she was "at the ungrateful age"; as we have said, apart from her eyes, she seemed rather homely than pretty; she had, however, no ungraceful features, but she was awkward, thin, timid, and bold at the same time, a big child, in short.

Her education was finished; that is to say, she had been taught religion, and also, and above all, devotion; then "history," that is, the thing which they call thus in the convent, geography, grammar, the participles, the kings of France, a little music, to draw profiles, etc., but further than this she was ignorant of everything, which is a charm

and peril. The soul of a young girl ought not to be left in obscurity; in after life there spring up too sudden and too vivid mirages, as in a camera obscura. She should be gently and discreetly enlightened rather by the reflection of realities than by their direct and stern light. A useful and graciously severe half-light which dissipates puerile fear and prevents a fall. Nothing but the maternal instinct, a wonderful intuition into which enter the memories of the maiden and the experience of the woman, knows how this half-light should be applied and of what it should be formed. Nothing supplies this instinct. To form the mind of a young girl all the nuns in the world are not equal to one mother.

Cosette had had no mother. She had only had many mothers in the plural.

As to Jean Valjean, there was, indeed, within him all manner of tenderness and all manner of solicitude; but he was only an old man who knew nothing at all.

Now, in this work of education, in this serious matter of the preparation of a woman for life, how much knowledge is needed to struggle against that great ignorance which we call innocence.

Nothing prepares a young girl for passions like the convent. The convent turns the thoughts in the direction of the unknown. The heart, thrown back upon itself, makes for itself a channel, being unable to overflow, and deepens, being unable to expand. From thence visions, suppositions, conjectures, romances sketched out, longings for adventures, fantastic constructions, whole castles built in the interior obscurity of the mind, dark and secret dwellings where the passions find an immediate lodging as soon as the grating is crossed, and they are permitted to enter. The convent is a compression which, in order to triumph over the human heart, must continue through the whole life.

On leaving the convent, Cosette could have found nothing more grateful and more dangerous than the house on the Rue Plumet. It was the continuation of solitude with the beginning of liberty; an inclosed garden, but a sharp, rich, voluptuous and odorous nature; the same dreams as in the convent, but with glimpses of young men; a grating, but upon the street.

Still, we repeat, when she came there she was but a child. Jean Valjean gave her this uncultivated garden. "Do whatever you like with it," said he to her. It delighted Cosette; she ransacked every thicket and turned over every stone, she sought for "animals"; she played while she dreamed; she loved this garden for the insects which she found in the grass under her feet, while she loved it for the stars which she saw in the branches over her head.

And then she loved her father, that is to say, Jean Valjean, with all her heart, with a frank filial passion which made the good man a welcome and very pleasant companion for her. We remember that M. Madeleine was a great reader; Jean Valjean had continued it; through this he had come to talk very well; he had the secret wealth and the eloquence of a humble and earnest intellect which has secured its own culture. He retained just enough harshness to flavor his goodness; he had a rough mind and a gentle heart. At the Luxembourg in their conversations, he gave long explanations of everything, drawing from what he had read, drawing also from what he had suffered. As she listened, Cosette's eyes wandered dreamily.

This simple man was sufficient for Cosette's thought, even as this wild garden was to her eyes. When she had had a good chase after the butterflies she would come up to him breathless and say: "Oh! how I have run!" He would kiss her forehead.

Cosette adored the good man. She was always running after him. Where Jean Valjean was, was happiness. As Jean Valjean did not live in the summer-house or the garden, she found more pleasure in the paved back yard than in the inclosure full of flowers, and in the little bedroom furnished with straw chairs than in the great parlor hung with tapestry, where she could recline on silken arm-chairs. Jean Valjean sometimes said to her, smiling with the happiness of being teased: "Why don't you go home? why don't you leave me alone?"

She would give him those charming little scoldings which are so full of grace coming from the daughter to the father.

"Father, I am very cold in your house; why don't you put in a carpet and a stove here?"

"Dear child, there are many people who are better than I who have not even a roof over their heads."

"Then, why do I have a fire and all things comfortable?"

"Because you are a woman and a child."

"Pshaw! men, then, ought to be cold and uncomfortable?"

"Some men."

"Well, I will come here so often that you will be obliged to have a fire."

Again she said to him:

"Father, why do you eat miserable bread like that?"

"Because, my daughter—"

"Well, if you eat it, I shall eat it."

Then, so that Cosette should not eat black bread, Jean Valjean ate white bread.

Cosette had but vague remembrance of her childhood. She prayed morning and evening for her mother, whom she had never known. The Thenardiers had remained to her like two hideous faces of some dream. She remembered that she had been "one day, at night," into a wood after water. She thought that that was very far from Paris. It seemed to her that she had commenced life in an abyss and that Jean Valjean had drawn her out of it. Her childhood impressed her as a time when there were only centipedes, spiders, and snakes about her. When she was dozing at night, before going to sleep, as she had no very clear idea of being Jean Valjean's daughter, and that he was her father, she imagined that her mother's soul had passed into this good man and come to live with her.

When he sat down she would rest her cheek on his white hair and silently drop a tear, saying to herself: "This is, perhaps, my mother, this man!"

Cosette, although this may be a strange statement, in her profound ignorance as a girl brought up in a convent, maternity moreover being absolutely unintelligible to virginity, had come to imagine that she had had as little of a mother as possible. She did not even know her name. Whenever she happened to ask Jean Valjean what it was, Jean Valjean was silent. If she repeated her question, he answered by a smile. Once she insisted; the smile ended with a tear.

This silence of Jean Valjean's covered Fantine with night.

Was this prudence? was it respect? was it a fear to give up that name to the chances of another memory than his own?

While Cosette was a little girl, Jean Valjean had been fond of talking with her about her mother; when she was a young maiden, this was impossible for him. It seemed to him that he no longer dared. Was this on account of Cosette? was it on account of Fantine? He felt a sort of religious horror at introducing that shade into Cosette's thoughts, and at bringing in the dead as a third sharer of their destiny. The more sacred that shade was to him the more formidable it seemed to him. He thought of Fantine and felt overwhelmed with silence. He saw dimly in the darkness something which resembled a finger on a mouth. Had all that modesty which had once been Fantine's, and which, during her life, had been forced out of her by violence, returned after her death to take its place over her, to watch, indignant, over the peace of the dead woman, and to guard her fiercely in her tomb? Did Jean Valjean, without knowing it, feel its influence? We who believe in death are not of those who would reject this mysterious explanation. Hence the impossibility of pronouncing, even at Cosette's desire, this name: "Fantine."

One day Cosette said to him:

"Father, I saw my mother in a dream last night. She had two great wings. My mother must have attained to sanctity in her life."

"Through martyrdom," answered Jean Valjean.

Still, Jean Valjean was happy.

When Cosette went out with him she leaned upon his arm, proud, happy, in the fulness of her heart. Jean Valjean at all these marks of tenderness so exclusive and so fully satisfied with him alone felt his thought melt into delight. The poor man shuddered, overflowed with an angelic joy; he declared in his transport that this would last through life; he said to himself that he really had not suffered enough to deserve such radiant happiness, and he thanked God in the depths of his soul for having permitted that he, a miserable man, should be so loved by this innocent being.

V

THE ROSE DISCOVERS THAT SHE IS AN ENGINE OF WAR

ONE day Cosette happened to look in her mirror, and she said to herself: "What!" It seemed to her almost that she was pretty. This threw her into strange anxiety. Up to this moment she had never thought of her face. She had seen herself in her glass, but she had not looked at herself. And then she had often been told that she was homely; Jean Valjean alone would quietly say: "Why, no! why, no!" However that might be, Cosette had always thought herself homely, and had grown up in that idea with the pliant resignation of childhood. And now suddenly her mirror said like Jean Valjean: "Why, no!" She had no sleep that night. "If I were pretty," thought she; "how funny it would be if I should be pretty!" And she called to mind those of her companions whose beauty had made an impression in the convent, and said: "What! I should be like *Mdlle.* Such-a-one!"

The next day she looked at herself, but not by chance, and she doubted. "Where were my wits gone?" said she; "no, I am homely." She had merely slept badly, her eyes were dark and she was pale. She had not felt very happy the evening before in the thought that she was beautiful, but she was sad at thinking so no longer. She did not look at herself again, and for more than a fortnight she tried to dress her hair with her back to the mirror.

In the evening after dinner she regularly made tapestry or did some convent work in the parlor while Jean Valjean read by her side. Once on raising her eyes from her work she was very much surprised at the anxious way in which her father was looking at her.

At another time she was passing along the street and it seemed to her that somebody behind her, whom she did not see, said: "Pretty woman, but badly dressed." "Pshaw!" thought she, "that is not me. I am well dressed and homely." She had on at the time her plush hat and merino dress.

At last, she was in the garden one day and heard poor

old Toussaint saying: "Monsieur, do you notice how pretty mademoiselle is growing?"

Cosette did not hear what her father answered. Toussaint's words threw her into a sort of commotion. She ran out of the garden, went up to her room, hurried to the glass—it was three months since she had looked at herself—and uttered a cry. She was dazzled by herself.

She was beautiful and handsome; she could not help being of Toussaint's and her mirror's opinion. Her form was complete, her skin had become white, her hair had grown lustrous, and unknown splendor was lighted up in her blue eyes. The consciousness of her beauty came to her entire, in a moment, like broad daylight when it bursts upon us; others noticed it, moreover, Toussaint said so; it was of her evidently that the passer had spoken, there was no more doubt; she went down into the garden again, thinking herself a queen, hearing the birds sing, it was in winter, seeing the sky golden, the sunshine in the trees, flowers among the shrubbery, wild, mad, in an inexpressible rapture.

For his part, Jean Valjean felt a deep and undefinable anguish in his heart.

He had, in fact, for some time past, been contemplating with terror that beauty which appeared every day more radiant upon Cosette's sweet face. A dawn, charming to all others, dreary to him.

Cosette had been beautiful for some time before she perceived it. But, from the first day, this unexpected light which slowly rose and by degrees enveloped the young girl's whole person, wounded Jean Valjean's gloomy eyes. He felt that it was a change in a happy life, so happy that he dared not stir for fear of disturbing something. This man, who had passed through every distress, who was still all bleeding from the lacerations of his destiny, who had been almost evil, and who had become almost holy, who, after having dragged the chain of the galleys, now dragged the invisible but heavy chain of indefinite infamy; this man whom the law had not released, and who might be at any instant retaken and led back from the obscurity of his virtue to the broad light of public shame; this man accepted all, excused all, pardoned all, blessed all, wished well to all, and only asked of Providence, of

men, of the laws, of society, of nature, of the world, this one thing, that Cosette should love him!

That Cosette should continue to love him! That God would not prevent the heart of this child from coming to him and remaining his! Loved by Cosette, he felt himself healed, refreshed, soothed, satisfied, rewarded, crowned. Loved by Cosette, he was content! he asked nothing more. Had anybody said to him: "Do you desire anything better?" he would have answered: "No." Had God said to him: "Do you desire heaven?" he would have answered: "I should be the loser."

Whatever might affect this condition, were it only on the surface, made him shudder as if it were the commencement of another. He had never known very clearly what the beauty of a woman was; but, by instinct, he understood that it was terrible.

This beauty which was blooming out more and more triumphant and superb beside him, under his eyes, upon the ingenuous and fearful brow of this child, he looked upon it, from the depths of his ugliness, his old age, his misery, his reprobation and his dejection with dismay.

He said to himself: "How beautiful she is! What will become of me?"

Here, in fact, was the difference between his tenderness and the tenderness of a mother. What he saw with an envious a mother would have seen with delight.

The first symptoms were not slow to manifest themselves.

From the morrow of the day on which she had said: "Really, I am handsome!" Cosette gave attention to her dress. She recalled the words of the passer: "Pretty, but badly dressed," breath of an oracle which had passed by her and vanished after depositing in her heart one of the two germs which must afterward fill the whole life of the woman—coquetry. Love is the other.

With faith in her beauty, the entire feminine soul blossomed within her. She was horrified at the merino and ashamed of the plush. Her father had never refused her anything. She knew at once the whole science of the hat, the dress, the cloak, the boot, the cuff, the stuff which sits well, the color which is becoming, that science which makes the Parisian woman something so charming, so deep, and

so dangerous. The phrase *heady woman* was invented for her.

In less than a month little Cosette was, in that Thebaid of the Rue de Babylone, not only one of the prettiest women, which is something, but one of "the best dressed" in Paris, which is much more. She would have liked to meet "her passer" to hear what he would say, and "to show him!" The truth is that she was ravishing in every point, and that she distinguished marvelously well between a Gerard hat and an Herbaut hat.

Jean Valjean beheld these ravages with anxiety. He, who felt that he could never more than creep, or walk at the most, saw wings growing on Cosette.

Still, merely by simple inspection of Cosette's toilette, a woman would have recognized that she had no mother. Certain little proprieties, certain special conventionalities, were not observed by Cosette. A mother, for instance, would have told her that a young girl does not wear damask.

The first day that Cosette went out with her dress and mantle of black damask and her white crape hat, she came to take Jean Valjean's arm, gay, radiant, rosy, proud, and brilliant. "Father," said she, "how do you like this?" Jean Valjean answered in a voice which resembled the bitter voice of envy: "Charming!" He seemed as usual during the walk. When they came back he asked Cosette: "Are you not going to wear your dress and hat any more?"

This occurred in Cosette's room. Cosette turned toward the wardrobe where her boarding-school dress was hanging.

"That disguise!" said she. "Father, what would you have me do with it? Oh! to be sure, no, I shall never wear those horrid things again. With that machine on my head, I look like Mme. Mad-dog."

Jean Valjean sighed deeply.

From that day he noticed that Cosette, who previously was always asking to stay in, saying: "Father, I enjoy myself better here with you," was now always asking to go out. Indeed, what is the use of having a pretty face and a delightful dress if you do not show them?

He also noticed that Cosette no longer had the same taste for the back yard. She now preferred to stay in the garden, walking even without displeasure before the grat-

ing. Jean Valjean, ferocious, did not set his foot in the garden. He stayed in his back yard, like a dog.

Cosette, by learning that she was beautiful, lost the grace of not knowing it; an exquisite grace, for beauty heightened by artlessness is ineffable, and nothing is so adorable as dazzling innocence, going on her way, and holding in her hand, all unconscious, the key of a paradise. But what she lost in ingenuous grace she gained in pensive and serious charm. Her whole person, pervaded by the joys of youth, innocence, and beauty, breathed a splendid melancholy.

It was at this period that Marius, after the lapse of six months, saw her again at the Luxembourg.

VI

THE BATTLE COMMENCES

COSETTE, in her seclusion, like Marius in his, was ready to take fire. Destiny, with its mysterious and fatal patience, was slowly bringing these two beings near each other, fully charged and all languishing with the stormy electricities of passion—these two souls which held love as two clouds hold lightning, and which were to meet and mingle in a glance like clouds in a flash.

The power of a glance has been so much abused in love stories that it has come to be disbelieved in. Few people dare now to say two beings have fallen in love because they have looked at each other. Yet it is in this way that love begins, and in this way only. The rest is only the rest, and comes afterward. Nothing is more real than these great shocks which two souls give each other in exchanging this spark.

At that peculiar moment when Cosette unconsciously looked with this glance which so affected Marius, Marius had no suspicion that he also had a glance which affected Cosette.

She received from him the same harm and the same blessing.

For a long time now she had seen and scrutinized him, as young girls scrutinize and see, while looking another way. Marius still thought Cosette ugly, while Cosette al-

ready began to think Marius beautiful. But as he paid no attention to her this young man was quite indifferent to her.

Still she could not help saying to herself that he had beautiful hair, beautiful eyes, beautiful teeth, a charming voice, when she heard him talking with his comrades; that he walked with an awkward gait, if you will, but with a grace of his own; that he did not appear altogether stupid; that his whole person was noble, gentle, natural, and proud, and finally that he had a poor appearance, but that he had a good appearance.

On the day their eyes met and at last said abruptly to both those first obscure and ineffable things which the glance stammers out, Cosette at first did not comprehend. She went back thoughtfully to the house in the Rue de l'Ouest, to which Jean Valjean, according to his custom, had gone to spend six weeks. The next day, on waking, she thought of this unknown young man, so long indifferent and icy, who now seemed to give some attention to her; and it did not seem to her that this attention was in the least degree pleasant. She was rather a little angry at this disdainful beau. An undercurrent of war was excited in her. It seemed to her, and she felt a pleasure in it still altogether childish, that at last she should be avenged.

Knowing that she was beautiful, she felt thoroughly, although in an indistinct way, that she had a weapon. Women play with their beauty as children do with their knives. They wound themselves with it.

We remember Marius' hesitations, his palpitations, his terrors. He remained at his seat and did not approach, which vexed Cosette. One day she said to Jean Valjean: "Father, let us walk a little this way." Seeing that Marius was not coming to her, she went to him. In such a case, every woman resembles Mohammed. And then, oddly enough, the first symptom of true love in a young man is timidity, in a young woman boldness. This is surprising, and yet nothing more natural. It is the two sexes tending to unite, and each acquiring the qualities of the other.

That day Cosette's glance made Marius mad, Marius' glance made Cosette tremble. Marius went away confident, and Cosette anxious. From that day onward they adored each other.

The first thing that Cosette felt was a vague yet deep sadness. It seemed to her that since yesterday her soul had become black. She no longer recognized herself. The whiteness of soul of young girls, which is composed of coldness and gayety, is like snow. It melts before love, which is its sun.

Cosette did not know what love was. She had never heard the word uttered in its earthly sense. In the books of profane music which came into the convent, *amour* was replaced by *tambour*, or *pandour*. This made puzzles which exercised the imagination of the great girls, such as: "Oh! how delightful is the tambour!" or "Pity is not a pandour!" But Cosette had left while yet too young to be much concerned about the "tambour." She did not know, therefore, what name to give to what she now experienced. Is one less sick for not knowing the name of the disease?

She loved with so much the more passion as she loved with ignorance. She did not know whether it were good or evil, beneficent or dangerous, necessary or accidental, eternal or transitory, permitted or prohibited; she loved. She would have been very much astonished if anybody had said to her: "You are sleepless! that is forbidden! You do not eat! that is very wrong! You have sinkings and palpitations of the heart! that is not right. You blush and you turn pale when a certain being dressed in black appears at the end of a certain green walk! that is abominable!" She would not have understood it, and she would have answered: "How can I be to blame in a thing in which I can do nothing, and of which I know nothing?"

It proved that the love which presented itself was precisely that which best suited the condition of her soul. It was a sort of far-off worship, a mute contemplation, a deification by an unknown votary. It was the apprehension of adolescence by adolescence, the dream of her nights become a romance and remaining a dream, the wished-for phantom realized at last, and made flesh, but still having neither name nor wrong nor stain nor need nor defect; in a word, a lover distant and dwelling in the ideal; a chimera having a form. Any closer and more palpable encounter would at this first period have terrified Cosette, still half-buried in the magnifying mirage of the cloister. She had all the terrors of children and all the terrors of nuns com-

mingled. The spirit of the convent, with which she had been imbued for five years, was still slowly evaporating from her whole person, and made everything tremulous about her. In this condition it was not a lover she needed, it was not even an admirer, it was a vision. She began to adore Marius as something charming, luminous, and impossible.

As extreme artlessness meets extreme coquetry, she smiled upon him very frankly.

She awaited impatiently every day the hour for her walk, she found Marius there, she felt herself inexpressibly happy and sincerely believed that she uttered her whole thought when she said to Jean Valjean: "What a delightful garden the Luxembourg is!"

Marius and Cosette were in the dark in regard to each other. They did not speak, they did not bow, they were not acquainted; they saw each other; and, like the stars in the sky separated by millions of leagues, they lived by gazing upon each other.

Thus it was that Cosette gradually became a woman, and beautiful and loving, grew with the consciousness of her beauty and in ignorance of her love. Coquettish, withal, through innocence.

VII

TO SADNESS, SADNESS AND A HALF

EVERY condition has its instinct. The old and eternal mother, nature, silently warned Jean Valjean of the presence of Marius. Jean Valjean shuddered in the darkness of his mind. Jean Valjean saw nothing, knew nothing, but still gazed with persistent fixedness at the darkness which surrounded him, as if he perceived on one side something which was building and on the other something which was falling down. Marius, also warned, and, according to the deep law of God, by this same mother nature, did all that he could to hide himself from the "father." It happened, however, that Jean Valjean sometimes perceived him. Marius' ways were no longer at all natural. He had an equivocal prudence and an awkward boldness. He ceased to come near them as formerly; he sat down at a dis-

tance and remained there in an ecstasy! he had a book and pretended to be reading; why did he pretend? Formerly he came with his old coat, now he had his new coat on every day; it was not very certain that he did not curl his hair, he had strange eyes, he wore gloves; in short, Jean Valjean cordially detested this young man.

Cosette gave no ground for suspicion. Without knowing exactly what affected her, she had a very definite feeling that it was something and that it must be concealed.

There was between the taste for dress which had arisen in Cosette and the habit of wearing new coats which had grown upon this unknown man a parallelism which made Jean Valjean anxious. It was an accident, perhaps; doubtless, certainly, but a threatening accident.

He had never opened his mouth to Cosette about the unknown man. One day, however, he could not contain himself, and, with that uncertain despair which hastily drops the plummet into his happiness, he said to her: "What a pedantic air that young man has!"

Cosette, a year before, an unconcerned little girl, would have answered: "Why, no, he is charming." Ten years later, with the love of Marius in her heart, she would have answered: "Pedantic and insupportable to the sight! you are quite right!" At the period of life and of heart in which she then was, she merely answered with supreme calmness: "That young man!"

As if she saw him for the first time in her life.

"How stupid I am!" thought Jean Valjean. "She had not even noticed him. I have shown him to her myself."

Oh, simplicity of the old! depth of the young.

There is another law of these young years of suffering and care, of these sharp struggles of the first love against the first obstacles: the young girl does not allow herself to be caught in any toil, the young man falls into all. Jean Valjean had commenced a sullen war against Marius, which Marius, with the sublime folly of his passion and his age, did not guess. Jean Valjean spread around him a multitude of snares; he changed his hours, he changed his seat, he forgot his handkerchief, he went to the Luxembourg alone; Marius fell headlong into every trap; and to all these interrogation points planted upon his path by Jean Valjean he answered ingenuously yes. Meanwhile

Cosette was still walled in in her apparent unconcern and her imperturbable tranquillity, so that Jean Valjean came to this conclusion: "This booby is madly in love with Cosette, but Cosette does not even know of his existence!"

There was, nevertheless, a painful tremor in the heart. The moment when Cosette would fall in love might come at any instant. Does not everything begin by indifference?

Once only Cosette made a mistake and startled him. He rose from the seat to go, after sitting there three hours, and she said: "So soon!"

Jean Valjean had not discontinued the promenades in the Luxembourg, not wishing to do anything singular, and, above all, dreading to excite any suspicion in Cosette; but during those hours so sweet to the two lovers, while Cosette was sending her smile to the intoxicated Marius, who perceived nothing but that, and now saw nothing in the world save one radiant, adored face, Jean Valjean fixed upon Marius glaring and terrible eyes. He who had come to believe that he was no longer capable of a malevolent feeling, had moments in which, when Marius was there, he thought that he was again becoming savage and ferocious, and felt opening and upheaving against this young man those old depths of his soul where there had once been so much wrath. It seemed to him almost as if the unknown craters were forming within him again.

What? he was there, that creature? What did he come for? He came to pry, to scent, to examine, to attempt; he came to say, "Eh, why not?" He came to prowl about his, Jean Valjean's, life! to prowl about his happiness, to clutch it and carry it away!

Jean Valjean added: "Yes, that is it! What is he looking for? an adventure! What does he want? an amour! An amour!—and as for me! What! I, after having been the most miserable of men, shall be the most unfortunate; I shall have spent sixty years of life upon my knees; I shall have suffered all that a man can suffer! I shall have grown old without having been young; I shall have lived with no family, no relatives, no friends, no wife, no children. I shall have left my blood on every stone, on every thorn, on every post, along every wall; I shall have been mild, although the world was harsh to me, and good, al-

though it was evil; I shall have become an honest man in spite of all; I shall have repented of the wrong which I have done, and pardoned the wrongs which have been done to me, and the moment that I am rewarded, the moment that it is over, the moment that I reach the end, the moment that I have what I desire, rightfully and justly—I have paid for it, I have earned it—it will all disappear, it will all vanish, and I shall lose Cosette, and I shall lose my life, my joy, my soul, because a great booby has been pleased to come and lounge about the Luxembourg.”

Then his eyes filled with a strange and dismal light. It was no longer a man looking upon a man; it was not an enemy looking upon an enemy. It was a dog looking upon a robber.

We know the rest. The insanity of Marius continued. One day he followed Cosette to the Rue de l'Ouest; another day he spoke to the porter; the porter in his turn spoke, and said to Jean Valjean: “Monsieur, who is that curious young man who has been asking for you?” The next day Jean Valjean cast that glance at Marius which Marius finally perceived. A week after Jean Valjean had moved. He resolved that he would never set his foot again either in the Luxembourg or in the Rue de l'Ouest. He returned to the Rue Plumet.

Cosette did not complain, she said nothing, she asked no questions, she did not seek to know any reason; she was already at that point at which one fears discovery and self-betrayal. Jean Valjean had no experience of this misery, the only misery which is charming, and the only misery which he did not know; for this reason he did not understand the deep significance of Cosette's silence. He noticed only that she had become sad and he became gloomy. There was on either side an armed inexperience. Once he made a trial. He asked Cosette:

“Would you like to go to the Luxembourg?”

A light illuminated Cosette's pale face.

“Yes,” said she.

They went. Three months had passed. Marius went there no longer. Marius was not there.

The next day Jean Valjean asked Cosette again:

“Would you like to go to the Luxembourg?”

She answered sadly and quietly:

"No."

Jean Valjean was hurt by this sadness and harrowed by this gentleness.

What was taking place in this spirit, so young and already so impenetrable? What was in course of accomplishment in it? what was happening to Cosette's soul? Sometimes, instead of going to bed, Jean Valjean sat by his bedside with his head in his hands, and he spent whole nights asking himself: "What is there in Cosette's mind?" and thinking what things she could be thinking about.

Oh! in those hours what mournful looks he turned toward the cloister, that chaste summit, that abode of angels, that inaccessible glacier of virtue. With what despairing rapture he contemplated that convent garden, full of unknown flowers and secluded maidens, where all perfumes and all souls rose straight toward heaven! How he worshiped that Eden, now closed forever, from which he had voluntarily departed and from which he had foolishly descended! How he regretted his self-denial, his madness in having brought Cosette back to the world, poor hero of sacrifice, caught and thrown to the ground by his very devotedness! How he said to himself: "What have I done?"

Still, nothing of this was exhibited toward Cosette; neither capriciousness nor severity. Always the same serene and kind face. Jean Valjean's manner was more tender and more paternal than ever. If anything could have raised a suspicion that there was less happiness it was the greater gentleness.

For her part, Cosette was languishing. She suffered from the absence of Marius, as she had rejoiced in his presence, in a peculiar way, without really knowing it. When Jean Valjean ceased to take her on their usual walk her woman's instinct murmured confusedly in the depths of her heart that she must not appear to cling to the Luxembourg; and that, if it were indifferent to her, her father would take her back there. But days, weeks, and months passed away. Jean Valjean had tacitly accepted Cosette's tacit consent. She regretted it. It was too late. The day she returned to the Luxembourg Marius was no longer there. Marius, then, had disappeared: it was all over; what could she do? Would she ever find him again? She felt a constriction of her heart, which nothing relaxed and

which was increasing every day; she no longer knew whether it was winter or summer, sunshine or rain, whether the birds sang, whether it was the season for dahlias or daisies, whether the Luxembourg was more charming than the Tuileries, whether the linen which the washerwoman brought home was starched too much or not enough, whether Toussaint did her "marketing" well or ill; and she became dejected, absorbed, intent upon a single thought, her eye wild and fixed, as when one looks into the night at the deep black place where an apparition has vanished.

Still she did not let Jean Valjean see anything except her paleness. She kept her face sweet for him.

This paleness was more than sufficient to make Jean Valjean anxious. Sometimes he asked her: "What is the matter with you?"

She answered: "Nothing."

And, after a silence, as she felt that he was sad also, she continued: "And you, father, is not something the matter with you?"

"Me? nothing," said he.

These two beings, who had loved each other so exclusively and with so touching a love, and who had lived so long for each other, were now suffering by each other and through each other—without speaking of it, without harsh feeling, and smiling the while.

VIII

THE CHAIN

THE more unhappy of the two was Jean Valjean. Youth, even in its sorrows, always has a brilliancy of its own.

At certain moments, Jean Valjean suffered so much that he became puerile. It is the peculiarity of grief to bring out the childish side of man. He felt irresistibly that Cosette was escaping him. He would have been glad to put forth an effort, to hold her fast, to rouse her enthusiasm by something external and striking. These ideas, puerile, as we have just said, and at the same time senile, gave him, by their very childishness, a just idea of

the influence of gew-gaws over the imagination of young girls. He chanced once to see a general pass in the street on horseback in full uniform—Count Coutard, commandant of Paris. He envied this gilded man; he thought what happiness it would be to be able to put on that coat, which was an incontestable thing; that if Cosette saw him thus it would dazzle her; that when he should give his arm to Cosette and pass before the gate of the Tuileries, they would present arms to him, and that that would so satisfy Cosette that it would destroy her inclination to look at the young men.

An unexpected shock came to him in the midst of these sad thoughts.

In the isolated life which they were leading, and since they had come to live in the Rue Plumet, they had formed a habit. They sometimes made a pleasure excursion to go and see the sun rise, a gentle joy suited to those who are entering upon life and those who are leaving it.

A walk at early dawn to him who loves solitude is equivalent to a walk at night, with the gayety of nature added. The streets are empty and the birds are singing. Cosette, herself a bird, usually awoke early. These morning excursions were arranged the evening before. He proposed, she accepted. They were planned as a conspiracy, they went out before day, and these were so many pleasant hours for Cosette. Such innocent eccentricities have a charm for the young.

Jean Valjean's inclination was, we know, to go to unfrequented spots, to solitary nooks, to neglected places. There were at that time in the neighborhood of the barrières of Paris some poor fields, almost in the city, where there grew in summer a scanty crop of wheat, and which in autumn, after this was gathered, appeared not to have been harvested, but stripped. Jean Valjean had a predilection for these fields. Cosette did not dislike them. To him it was solitude, to her it was liberty. There she became a little girl again, she could run and almost play, she took off her hat, laid it on Jean Valjean's knees, and gathered flowers. She looked at the butterflies upon the blossoms, but did not catch them; gentleness and tenderness are born with love, and the young girl who has in her heart a trembling and fragile ideal, feels pity for a butterfly's wing.

She wove garlands of wild poppies which she put upon her head, and which, lit up and illuminated in the sunshine and blazing like a flame, made a crown of fire for her fresh and rosy face.

Even after their life had been saddened they continued their habit of morning walks.

So one October morning, tempted by the deep serenity of the autumn of 1831, they had gone out and found themselves at daybreak near the Barrière du Maine. It was not day; it was dawn; a wild and ravishing moment. A few constellations here and there in the deep, pale heavens, the earth all black, the sky all white, a shivering in the spears of grass, everywhere the mysterious thrill of the twilight. A lark, which seemed among the stars, was singing at this enormous height, and one would have said that this hymn from littleness to the infinite was calming the immensity. In the east, the Val de Grâce carved out upon the clear horizon, with the sharpness of steel, its obscure mass; Venus was rising in splendor behind that dome like a soul escaping from a dark edifice.

All was peace and silence; nobody upon the highway; on the footpaths a few scattered workingmen, hardly visible, going to their work.

Jean Valjean was seated on the sidewalk, upon some timbers lying by the gate of a lumber-yard. He had his face turned toward the road and his back toward the light; he had forgotten the sun, which was just rising; he had fallen into one of those deep meditations in which the whole mind is absorbed, which even imprison the senses and which are equivalent to four walls. There are some meditations which may be called vertical; when one is at the bottom it takes time to return to the surface of the earth. Jean Valjean had descended into one of these reveries. He was thinking of Cosette, of the happiness possible if nothing came between her and him, of that light with which she filled his life, a light which was the atmosphere of his soul. He was almost happy in this reverie. Cosette, standing near him, was watching the clouds as they became ruddy.

Suddenly Cosette exclaimed: "Father, I should think somebody was coming down there." Jean Valjean looked up.

Cosette was right.

The highway which leads to the ancient *Barrière du Maine* is a prolongation, as everybody knows, of the *Rue de Sèvres*, and is intersected at a right angle by the interior boulevard. At the corner of the highway and the boulevard, at the point where they diverge, a sound was heard, difficult of explanation at such an hour, and a kind of moving confusion appeared. Some shapeless thing, which came from the boulevard, was entering upon the highway.

It grew larger, it seemed to move in order, still it was bristling and quivering; it looked like a wagon, but they could not make out the load. There were horses, wheels, cries; whips were cracking. By degrees the features became definite, although enveloped in darkness. It was, in fact, a wagon which had just turned out of the boulevard into the road and which was making its way toward the *barrière*, near which Jean Valjean was; a second, of the same appearance, followed it; then a third, then a fourth; seven vehicles turned in in succession, the horses' heads touching the rear of the wagons. Dark forms were moving upon these wagons, flashes were seen in the twilight as if of drawn swords, a clanking was heard which resembled the rattling of chains; it advanced, the voices grew louder and it was as terrible a thing as comes forth from the cavern of dreams.

As it approached it took form and outlined itself behind the trees with the pallor of an apparition; the mass whitened; daylight, which was rising little by little, spread a pallid gleam over this crawling thing, which was at once sepulchral and alive; the heads of the shadows became the faces of corpses, and it was this:

Seven wagons were moving in file upon the road. Six of them were of a peculiar structure. They resembled coopers' drays; they were a sort of long ladder placed upon two wheels, forming thills at the forward end. Each dray, or better, each ladder, was drawn by four horses tandem. Upon these ladders strange clusters of men were carried. In the little light that there was these men were not seen; they were only guessed. Twenty-four on each wagon, twelve on each side back to back, their faces toward the passers-by, their legs hanging down, these men were traveling thus: and they had behind them something which

clanked and which was a chain, and at their necks something which shone and which was an iron collar. Each had his collar, but the chain was for all; so that these twenty-four men, if they should chance to get down from the dray and walk, would be made subject to a sort of inexorable unity and have to wriggle over the ground with the chain for a backbone, very much like centipedes. In front and rear of each wagon two men, armed with muskets, stood, each having an end of the chain under his foot. The collars were square. The seventh wagon, a huge cart with racks, but without a cover, had four wheels and six horses, and carried a resounding pile of iron kettles, melting-pots, furnaces, and chains, over which were scattered a number of men, who were bound and lying at full length, and who appeared to be sick. This cart, entirely exposed to view, was furnished with broken hurdles, which seemed to have served in the ancient punishments.

These wagons kept the middle of the street. At either side marched a row of guards of infamous appearance, wearing three-pronged hats like the soldiers of the Directory, stained, torn, filthy, muffled up in Invalides' uniforms and hearse-boys' trousers, half gray and half blue, almost in tatters, with red epaulets, yellow cross-belts, sheath-knives, muskets, and clubs; a species of servant-soldiers. These sbirri seemed a compound of the abjectness of the beggar and the authority of the executioner. The one who appeared to be their chief had a horsewhip in his hand. All these details, blurred by the twilight, were becoming clearer and clearer in the growing light. At the head and the rear of the convoy gendarmes marched, on horseback, solemn and with drawn swords.

This cortège was so long that when the first wagon reached the *barrière* the last had hardly turned out of the boulevard.

A crowd, come from nobody knows where and gathered in a twinkling, as is frequently the case in Paris, were pushing along the two sides of the highway and looking on. In the neighboring lanes there were heard people shouting and calling each other and the wooden shoes of the market-gardeners who were running to see.

The men heaped upon the drays were silent as they were jolted along. They were livid with the chill of the morn-

ing. They all had tow trousers and their bare feet were in wooden shoes. The rest of their costume was according to the fancy of misery. Their dress was hideously variegated; nothing is more dismal than the harlequin of rags. Felt hats jammed out of shape, glazed caps, horrible cloth caps, and besides the linen monkey-jacket, the black coat out at the elbows; several had women's hats; others had baskets on their heads; hairy breasts could be seen, and through the holes in their clothing, tattooings could be discerned; temples of love, burning hearts, cupids, eruptions, and red sores could also be seen. Two or three had a rope of straw fixed to the bars of the dray and hung beneath them like a stirrup, which sustained their feet. One of them held in his hand and carried to his mouth something which looked like a black stone, which he seemed to be gnawing; it was bread which he was eating. There were none but dry eyes among them; they were rayless, or lighted with an evil light. The troop of escort was cursing, the chained did not whisper; from time to time there was heard the sound of the blow of a club upon their shoulders or their heads; some of these men were yawning; their rags were terrible; their feet hung down, their shoulders swung, their heads struck together, their irons rattled, their eyes glared fiercely, their fists were clinched or opened inertly like the hands of the dead; behind the convoy a troop of children were bursting with laughter.

This file of wagons, whatever it was, was dismal. It was evident that to-morrow, that in an hour, a shower might spring up, that it would be followed by another and another, and that the worn-out clothing would be soaked through; that once wet, these men would never get dry; that once chilled, they would never get warm again; that their tow trousers would be fastened to their skin by the rain; that water would fill their wooden shoes; that blows of the whip could not prevent the chattering of their jaws; that the chain would continue to hold them by the neck; that their feet would continue to swing; and it was impossible not to shudder at seeing these human creatures thus bound and passive under the chilling clouds of autumn and given up to the rain, to the wind, to all the fury of the elements, like trees and stones.

The clubs did not spare even the sick, who lay tied with

ropes and motionless in the seventh wagon, and who seemed to have been thrown there like sacks filled with misery.

Suddenly the sun appeared; the immense radiance of the orient burst forth, and one would have said that it set all these savage heads on fire. Their tongues were loosened, a conflagration of sneers, of oaths and song burst forth. The broad horizontal light cut the whole file in two, illuminating their heads and their bodies, leaving their feet and the wheels in the dark. Their thoughts appeared upon their faces; the moment was appalling; demons visible with their masks fallen off, ferocious souls laid bare. Lighted up, this group was still dark. Some, who were gay, had quills in their mouths, from which they blew vermin among the crowd, selecting the women; the dawn intensified these mournful profiles by the blackness of the shade; not one of these beings who was not deformed by misery; and it was so monstrous that one would have said that it changed the sunbeams into the gleam of the lightning's flash. The wagon-load which led the cortège had struck up and were singing at the top of their voices with a ghastly joviality a medley of Desaugiers, then famous, "La Vestale"; the trees shivered drearily on the sidewalks, the bourgeois listened with faces of idiotic bliss to these obscenities chanted by spectres.

Every form of distress was present in this chaos of a cortège; there was the facial angle of every beast, old men, youths, bald heads, gray beards, cynical monstrosities, dogged resignations, savage grimaces, insane attitudes, snouts set off with caps, heads like those of young girls with corkscrews over their temples, child faces horrifying on that account, thin skeleton faces which lacked nothing but death. On the first wagon was a negro, who, perhaps, had been a slave and could compare chains. The fearful leveler, disgrace, had passed over these brows; at this degree of abasement the last transformation had taken place in all to its utmost degree; and ignorance, changed into stupidity, was the equal of intelligence changed into despair. No possible choice among these men, who seemed by their appearance the *élite* of the mire. It was clear that the marshal, whoever he was, of this foul procession had not classified them. These beings had been bound and coupled pell-mell, probably in alphabetic disorder, and loaded hap-

hazard upon these wagons. The aggregation of horrors, however, always ends by evolving a resultant; every addition of misfortune gives a total; there came from each chain a common soul, and each cart-load had its own physiognomy. Beside the one which was singing, there was one which was howling; a third was begging; one was seen gnashing his teeth; another was threatening the bystanders, another blaspheming God; the last was silent as the tomb. Dante would have thought he saw the seven circles of hell on their passage.

A passage from condemnation toward punishment, made drearily, not upon the formidable flashing car of the Apocalypse, but more dismal still upon a hangman's cart.

One of the guard who had a hook on the end of his club from time to time made a semblance of stirring up this heap of human ordure. An old woman in the crowd pointed them out with her finger to a little boy five years old, and said: "Whelp, that will teach you!"

As the songs and the blasphemy increased, he who seemed the captain of the escort cracked his whip, and upon that signal, a fearful, sullen and promiscuous cudgeling, which sounded like hail, fell upon the seven wagons; many roared and foamed, which redoubled the joy of the *gamins* who had collected, a swarm of flies upon these wounds.

Jean Valjean's eye had become frightful. It was no longer an eye; it was that deep window which takes the place of the look in certain unfortunate beings, who seem unconscious of reality, and from which flashes out the reflection of horrors and catastrophes. He was not looking upon a sight; a vision was appearing to him. He endeavored to rise, to flee, to escape; he could not move a limb. Sometimes things which you see clutch you and hold you. He was spellbound, stupefied, petrified, asking himself, through a vague, unutterable anguish, what was the meaning of this sepulchral persecution, and whence came this pandemonium which was pursuing him. All at once he raised his hand to his forehead, a common gesture with those to whom memory suddenly returns; he remembered that this was really the route, that this detour was usual to avoid meeting the king, which was always possible on the

Fontainebleau road, and that, thirty-five years before, he had passed through this barrière.

Cosette, though from another cause, was equally terrified. She did not comprehend; her breath failed her; what she saw did not seem possible to her; at last she exclaimed:

"Father, what can there be in those wagons?"

Jean Valjean answered:

"Convicts."

"And where are they going?"

"To the galleys."

At this moment the cudgeling, multiplied by a hundred hands, reached its climax; blows with the flat of the sword joined in; it was a fury of whips and clubs; the galley slaves crouched down; a hideous obedience was produced by the punishment, and all were silent, with the look of chained wolves. Cosette trembled in every limb. She continued:

"Father, are they still men?"

"Sometimes," said the wretched man.

It was, in fact, the chain which, setting out before day from Bicêtre, took the Mans road to avoid Fontainebleau, where the king then was. This detour made the terrible journey last three or four days longer, but to spare the royal person the sight of the punishment it may well be prolonged.

Jean Valjean returned home overwhelmed. Such encounters are shocks, and the memory which they leave resembles a convulsion.

Jean Valjean, however, on the way back to the Rue de Babylone with Cosette, did not notice that she asked him other questions regarding what they had just seen; perhaps he was himself too much absorbed in his own dejection to heed her words or to answer them. But at night, as Cosette was leaving him to go to bed, he heard her say in an undertone, and as if talking to herself: "It seems to me that if I should meet one of those men in my path, oh, my God! I should die just from seeing him near me!"

Fortunately it happened that on the morrow of this tragic day there were, in consequence of some official celebration, fêtes in Paris, a review in the Champ de Mars, rowing matches upon the Seine, theatricals in the Champs Elysées, fireworks at l'Etoile, illuminations everywhere.

Jean Valjean, doing violence to his habits, took Cosette to these festivities, for the purpose of diverting her mind from the memories of the day before, and of effacing under the laughing tumult of all Paris the abominable thing which had passed before her. The review, which enlivened the fête, made the display of uniforms quite natural; Jean Valjean put on his national guard uniform with the vague interior feeling of a man who is taking refuge. Yet the object of this walk seemed attained. Cosette, whose law it was to please her father, and for whom, moreover, every sight was new, accepted the diversion with the easy and blithe grace of youth, and did not look too disdainfully upon that promiscuous bowl of joy which is called a public fête! So that Jean Valjean could believe that he had succeeded, and that no trace remained of the hideous vision.

Some days later, one morning, when the sun was bright, and they were both upon the garden steps, another infraction of the rules which Jean Valjean seemed to have imposed upon himself, and of the habit of staying in her room, which sadness had imposed upon Cosette, Cosette, in her dressing-gown, was standing in that undress of the morning hour which is charmingly becoming to young girls, and which has the appearance of a cloud upon a star; and, with her head in the light, rosy from having slept well, under the tender gaze of the gentle good man, she was picking a daisy in pieces. Cosette was ignorant of the transporting legend: "I love thee a little, passionately," etc.; who should have taught it to her? She was fingering this flower by instinct, innocently, without suspecting that to pick a daisy in pieces is to pluck a heart. Were there a fourth grace named melancholy, and were it smiling, she would have seemed that grace. Jean Valjean was fascinated by the contemplation of her slender fingers upon that flower, forgetting everything in the radiance of this child. A redbreast was twittering in the shrubbery beside them. White clouds were crossing the sky so gayly that one would have said they had just been set at liberty. Cosette continued picking her flower attentively; she seemed to be thinking of something, but that must have been pleasant. Suddenly she turned her head over her shoulder, with the delicate motion of the swan, and said to Jean Valjean: "Father, what are they, then, the galley slaves?"

BOOK FOURTH—AID FROM BELOW MAY
BE AID FROM ABOVE

I

WOUND WITHOUT—CURE WITHIN

THUS their life gradually darkened.

There was left to them but one distraction, and this had formerly been a pleasure; that was to carry bread to those who were hungry and clothing to those who were cold. In these visits to the poor, in which Cosette often accompanied Jean Valjean, they found some remnant of their former light-heartedness; and, sometimes, when they had had a good day, when many sorrows had been relieved and many little children revived and made warm, Cosette, in the evening, was a little gay. It was at this period that they visited the Jondrette den.

The day after that visit Jean Valjean appeared in the cottage in the morning with his ordinary calmness, but with a large wound on his left arm, very much inflamed and very venomous, which resembled a burn, and which he explained in some way or other. This wound confined him within doors more than a month with fever. He would see no physician. When Cosette urged it, "Call the dog-doctor," said he.

Cosette dressed it night and morning with so divine a grace and so angelic a pleasure in being useful to him, that Jean Valjean felt all his old happiness return, his fears and his anxieties dissipate, and he looked upon Cosette, saying, "Oh, the good wound! Oh, the kind hurt!"

Cosette, as her father was sick, had deserted the summer-house and regained her taste for the little lodge and the back yard. She spent almost all her time with Jean Valjean, and read to him the books which he liked. In general books of travel. Jean Valjean was born anew; his happiness revived with inexpressible radiance; the Luxembourg, the unknown young prowler, Cosette's coldness—all these clouds of his soul faded away. He now said to himself: "I imagined all that. I am an old fool!"

His happiness was so great that the frightful discovery of the Thenardiens, made in the Jondrette den, and so unexpectedly, had in some sort glided over him. He had succeeded in escaping; his trace was lost, what mattered the rest! he thought of it only to grieve over those wretches. "They are now in prison, and can do no harm in future," thought he, "but what a pitiful family in distress!"

As to the hideous vision of the Barrière du Maine, Cosette had never mentioned it again.

At the convent Sister St. Mechthilde had taught Cosette music. Cosette had the voice of a warbler with a soul, and sometimes in the evening, in the humble lodging of the wounded man, she sang plaintive songs which rejoiced Jean Valjean.

Spring came, the garden was so wonderful at that season of the year that Jean Valjean said to Cosette: "You never go there; I wish you would walk in it." "As you will, father," said Cosette.

And, out of obedience to her father, she resumed her walks in the garden, oftenest alone, for, as we have remarked, Jean Valjean, who probably dreaded being seen through the gate, hardly ever went there.

Jean Valjean's wound had been a diversion.

When Cosette saw that her father was suffering less, and that he was getting well, and that he seemed happy, she felt a contentment that she did not even notice, so gently and naturally did it come upon her. It was then the month of March, the days were growing longer, winter was departing; winter always carries with it something of our sadness; then April came, that daybreak of summer, fresh like every dawn, gay like every childhood; weeping a little sometimes like the infant that it is. Nature in this month has charming gleams which pass from the sky, the clouds, the trees, the fields, and the flowers, into the heart of man.

Cosette was still too young for this April joy, which resembled her, not to find its way to her heart. Insensibly, and without a suspicion on her part, the darkness passed away from her mind. In the spring it becomes light in sad souls, as at noon it becomes light in cellars. And Cosette was not now very sad. So it was, however,

but she did not notice it. In the morning, about ten o'clock, after breakfast, when she had succeeded in enticing her father into the garden for a quarter of an hour, and while she was walking in the sun in front of the steps, supporting his wounded arm, she did not perceive that she was laughing every moment, and that she was happy.

Jean Valjean saw her, with intoxication, again become fresh and rosy.

"Oh! the blessed wound!" repeated he, in a whisper.

And he was grateful to the Thenardiens.

As soon as his wound was cured he resumed his solitary and twilight walks.

It would be a mistake to believe that one can walk in this way alone in the uninhabited regions of Paris and not meet with some adventure.

II

MOTHER PLUTARCH IS NOT EMBARRASSED ON THE EXPLANATION OF A PHENOMENON

ONE evening little Gavroche had had no dinner; he remembered that he had had no dinner also the day before; this was becoming tiresome. He resolved that he would try for some supper. He went wandering about beyond La Salpêtrière, in the deserted spots; those are the places for good luck; where there is nobody, can be found something. He came to a settlement which appeared to him to be the village of Austerlitz.

In one of his preceding strolls he had noticed an old garden there haunted by an old man and an old woman, and in this garden a passable apple-tree. Beside this apple-tree there was a sort of fruit-loft poorly inclosed, where the conquest of an apple might be made. An apple is a supper; an apple is life. What ruined Adam might save Gavroche. The garden was upon a solitary lane unpaved and bordered with bushes for lack of houses; a hedge separated it from the lane.

Gavroche directed his steps toward the garden; he found the lane, he recognized the apple-tree, he verified the fruit-loft, he examined the hedge; a hedge is a stride. Day

was declining, not a cat in the lane, the time was good. Gavroche sketched out the escalade, then suddenly stopped. Somebody was talking in the garden, Gavroche looked through one of the openings in the hedge.

Within two steps of him, at the foot of the hedge on the other side, precisely at the point where the hole he was meditating would have taken him, lay a stone which made a kind of seat, and on this seat the old man of the garden was sitting, with the old woman standing before him. The old woman was muttering. Gavroche, who was anything but discreet, listened.

"M. Mabeuf!" said the old woman.

"Mabeuf!" thought Gavroche, "that is a funny name."

The old man who was addressed made no motion. The old woman repeated: "M. Mabeuf."

The old man, without raising his eyes from the ground, determined to answer: "What, Mother Plutarch?"

"Mother Plutarch!" thought Gavroche, "another funny name."

Mother Plutarch resumed, and the old man was forced to enter into the conversation.

"The landlord is dissatisfied."

"Why so?"

"There are three quarters due."

"In three months there will be four."

"He says that he will turn you out of doors to sleep."

"I shall go."

"The grocery woman wants to be paid. She holds on to her wood. What will you keep warm with this winter? We shall have no wood."

"There is the sun."

"The butcher refuses credit, he will not give us any more meat."

"That is all right. I do not digest meat well. It is too heavy."

"What shall we have for dinner?"

"Bread."

"The baker demands something on account, and says no money no bread."

"Very well."

"What will you eat?"

"We have the apples from the apple-tree."

"But, monsieur, we can't live like that without money."

"I have not any."

The old woman went away, the old man remained alone. He began to reflect. Gavroche was reflecting on his side. It was almost night.

The first result of Gavroche's reflection was, that instead of climbing over the hedge he crept under. The branches separated a little at the bottom of the bushes.

"Heigho," exclaimed Gavroche, internally, "an alcove!" and he hid in it. He almost touched Father Mabeuf's seat. He heard the octogenarian breathe.

Then, for dinner, he tried to sleep.

Sleep of a cat, sleep with one eye. Even while crouching there Gavroche kept watch.

The whiteness of the twilight sky blanched the earth, and the lane made a livid line between two rows of dusky bushes.

Suddenly, upon that whitened band, two dim forms appeared. One came before—the other at some distance behind.

"There are two fellows," growled Gavroche.

The first form seemed some old bourgeois bent and thoughtful, dressed more than simply, walking with the slow pace of an aged man, and taking his ease in the starry evening.

The second was straight, firm, and slight. It regulated its step by the step of the first; but in the unwonted slowness of the gait, dexterity and agility were manifest. This form had, in addition to something wild and startling, the whole appearance of what was then called a dandy; the hat was of the latest style, the coat was black, well cut, probably of fine cloth, and closely fitted to the form. The head was held up with a robust grace, and, under the hat, could be seen in the twilight the pale profile of a young man. This profile had a rose in its mouth. The second form was well known to Gavroche; it was Montparnasse.

As to the other he could have said nothing about it, except that it was an old good man.

Gavroche immediately applied himself to observation.

One of these passers evidently had designs upon the other. Gavroche was well situated to see the issue. The alcove had very conveniently become a hiding-place.

Montparnasse hiding, at such an hour, in such a place—it was threatening. Gavroche felt his *gamin's* heart moved with pity for the old man.

What could he do? Intervene? One weakness in aid of another? That would be ludicrous to Montparnasse. Gavroche could not conceal it from himself that, to this formidable bandit of eighteen, the old man first, the child afterward, would be but two mouthfuls.

While Gavroche was deliberating the attack was made, sharp and hideous. The attack of a tiger on a wild ass, a spider on a fly. Montparnasse, on a sudden, threw away the rose, sprang upon the old man, collared him, grasped him, and fastened to him, and Gavroche could hardly restrain a cry. A moment afterward one of these men was under the other, exhausted, panting, struggling, with a knee of marble upon his breast. Only it was not altogether as Gavroche had expected. The one on the ground was Montparnasse; the one above was the good man. All this happened a few steps from Gavroche.

The old man had received the shock and had returned it, and returned it so terribly that in the twinkling of an eye the assailant and the assailed had changed parts.

"There is a brave Invalid!" thought Gavroche.

And he could not help clapping his hands. But it was a clapping of hands thrown away. It did not reach the two combatants, absorbed and deafened by each other and mingling their breath in the contest.

There was silence. Montparnasse ceased to struggle. Gavroche said this aside: "Can he be dead?"

The good man had not spoken a word or uttered a cry. He arose, and Gavroche heard him say to Montparnasse: "Get up."

Montparnasse got up, but the good man held him. Montparnasse had the humiliated and furious attitude of a wolf caught by a sheep.

Gavroche looked and listened, endeavoring to double his eyes by his ears. He was enormously amused.

He was rewarded for his conscientious anxiety as a spectator. He was able to seize upon the wing the following dialogue, which borrowed a strangely tragic tone from the darkness. The good man questioned. Montparnasse responded.

"How old are you?"

"Nineteen."

"You are strong and well. Why don't you work?"

"It is fatiguing."

"What is your business?"

"Loafer."

"Speak seriously. Can I do anything for you? What would you like to be?"

"A robber."

There was a silence. The old man seemed to be thinking deeply. He was motionless, yet did not release Montparnasse.

From time to time the young bandit, vigorous and nimble, made the efforts of a beast caught in a snare. He gave a spring, attempted to trip, twisted his limbs desperately, endeavored to escape. The old man did not appear to perceive it, and with a single hand held his two arms with the sovereign indifference of absolute strength.

The old man's reverie continued for some time, then, looking steadily upon Montparnasse, he gently raised his voice and addressed to him, in that obscurity in which they were, a sort of solemn allocution, of which Gavroche did not lose a syllable:

"My child, you are entering through laziness into the most laborious of existences. Ah! you declare yourself a loafer! prepare to labor. Have you seen a terrible machine called the rolling-mill? Beware of it, it is a cunning and ferocious thing; if it but catch the skirt of your coat you are drawn in entirely. This machine is idleness. Stop, while there is yet time, and save yourself! otherwise it is all over; you will soon be between the wheels. Once caught, hope for nothing more. To fatigue, idler! no more rest. The implacable iron hand of labor has seized you. Earn a living, have a task, accomplish a duty, you do not wish it! To be like others is tiresome! Well! you will be different. Labor is the law; he who spurns it as tiresome will have it as a punishment. You are unwilling to be a workingman, you will be a slave. Labor releases you on the one hand only to retake you on the other; you are unwilling to be her friend, you will be her negro. Ah! you have refused the honest weariness of men, you shall have the sweat of the damned. While others sing

you will rave. You will see from afar, from below, other men at work; it will seem to you that they are at rest. The laborer, the reaper, the sailor, the blacksmith, will appear to you in the light like the blessed in a paradise. What a radiance in the anvil! To drive the plow, to bind the sheaf is happiness. The bark free before the wind, what a festival! You, idler, dig, draw, roll, march! Drag your halter, you are a beast of burden in the train of hell! Ah! to do nothing, that is your aim. Well! not a week, not a day, not an hour without crushing exhaustion. You can lift nothing but with anguish. Every minute which elapses will make your muscles crack. What will be a feather for others will be a rock for you. The simplest things will become steep. Life will make itself a monster about you. To go, to come, to breathe so many terrible labors. Your lungs will feel like a 100-pound weight. To go here rather than there will be a problem to solve. Any other man who wishes to go out opens his door, it is done, he is out of doors. You, if you wish to go out, must pierce your wall. To go into the street, what does everybody do? Everybody goes down the staircase; but you, you will tear up your bedclothes, you will make a rope of them strip by strip, then you will pass through your window and you will hang on that thread over an abyss, and it will be at night, in the storm, in the rain, in the tempest, and, if the rope is too short, you will have but one way to descend—to fall. To fall at a venture, into the abyss, from whatever height, upon what? Upon whatever is below, upon the unknown. Or you will climb through the flue of a chimney at the risk of burning yourself; or you will crawl through a sewer at the risk of being drowned. I do not speak of the holes you must conceal, of the stones you must take out and put back twenty times a day, of the mortar you must hide in your mattress. A lock presents itself; the bourgeois has in his pocket his key, made by a locksmith. You, if you want to pass out, are condemned to make a frightful masterpiece; you will take a big sou, you will cut it into two slices; with what tools? You will invent them. That is your business. Then you will hollow out the interior of these two slices, preserving the outside carefully, and you will cut all around the edge a screw-thread, so that they will fit

closely one upon the other, like a bottom and a cover. The bottom and the top thus screwed together, nobody will suspect anything. To the watchman, for you will be watched, it will be a big sou; to you it will be a box. What will you put in this box? A little bit of steel. A watch-spring in which you will cut teeth, and which will be a saw. With this saw, as long as a pin, and hidden in this sou, you will have to cut the bolt of the lock, the slide of the bolt, the clasp of the padlock, and the bar which you will have at your window, and the iron ring which you will have on your leg. This masterpiece finished, this prodigy accomplished, all those miracles of art, of address, of skill, of patience, executed, if it comes to be known that you are the author, what will be your reward? the dungeon. Behold your future. Idleness, pleasure, what abysses! To do nothing is a dreary course to take, be sure of it. To live idle upon the substance of society! To be useless, that is to say, noxious! This leads straight to the lowest depth of misery.

“Woe to him who would be a parasite! he will be vermin. Ah! it is not pleasant to you to work? Ah! you have but one thought; to eat, and drink and sleep in luxury. You will drink water, you will eat black bread, you will sleep upon a board, with irons riveted to your limbs, the chill of which you will feel at night upon your flesh! You will break those irons, you will flee. Very well. You will drag yourself on your belly in the bushes, and eat grass like the beasts of the forest. And you will be retaken. And then you will spend years in a dungeon, fastened to a wall, groping for a drink from your pitcher, gnawing a frightful loaf of darkness which the dogs would not touch, eating beans which the worms have eaten before you. You will be a wood-louse in a cellar. Oh! take pity on yourself, miserable child, young thing, a suckling not twenty years ago, who doubtless have a mother still alive! I conjure you, listen to me. You desire fine black clothes, shining pumps, to curl your hair, to put sweet-scented oil upon your locks, to please your women, to be handsome. You will be close shorn, with a red coat and wooden shoes. You wish a ring on your finger, you will have an iron collar on your neck. And if you look at a woman, a blow of the club. And you

will go in there at twenty, and you will come out at fifty! You will enter young, rosy, fresh, with your eyes bright and all your teeth white, and your beautiful youthful hair; you will come out broken, bent, wrinkled, toothless, horrible, with white hair! Oh! my child, you are taking a mistaken road; laziness is giving you bad advice; the hardest of all labor is robbery. Trust me, do not undertake this dreadful drudgery of being an idler. To become a rascal is not comfortable. It is not so hard to be an honest man. Go, now, and think of what I have said to you. And now, what did you want of me? my purse? Here it is."

And the old man, releasing Montparnasse, put his purse in his hand, which Montparnasse weighed for a moment; after which, with the same mechanical precaution as if he had stolen it, Montparnasse let it glide gently into the back pocket of his coat.

All this said and done, the good man turned his back and quietly resumed his walk.

"Blockhead!" murmured Montparnasse.

Who was this good man? the reader has doubtless guessed.

Montparnasse, in stupefaction, watched him till he disappeared in the twilight. This contemplation was fatal to him.

While the old man was moving away Gavroche was approaching.

Gavroche, with a side glance, made sure that Father Mabeuf, perhaps asleep, was still sitting on the seat. Then the urchin came out of his bushes, and began to creep along in the shade, behind the motionless Montparnasse. He reached Montparnasse thus without being seen or heard, gently insinuated his hand into the back pocket of the fine black cloth coat, took the purse, withdrew his hand, and, creeping off again, glided away like an adder into the darkness. Montparnasse, who had no reason to be upon his guard, and who was reflecting for the first time in his life, perceived nothing of it. Gavroche, when he had reached the point where Father Mabeuf was, threw the purse over the hedge, and fled at full speed.

The purse fell on the foot of Father Mabeuf. This shock awoke him. He stooped down, and picked up the purse. He did not understand it at all, and he opened it.

It was a purse with two compartments; in one there were some small coins; in the other there were six napoleons.

M. Mabeuf, very much startled, carried the thing to his housekeeper.

"This falls from the sky," said Mother Plutarch.

BOOK FIFTH—THE END OF WHICH IS UNLIKE THE BEGINNING

I

SOLITUDE AND THE BARRACKS

COSETTE'S grief, so poignant still, and so acute four or five months before, had without her knowledge even entered upon convalescence. Nature, spring, her youth, her love for her father, the gayety of the birds and the flowers, were filtering little by little, day by day, drop by drop, into this soul so pure and so young, something which almost resembled oblivion. Was the fire dying out entirely? or was it merely becoming a bed of embers? The truth is, that she had scarcely anything left of that sorrowful and consuming feeling.

One day she suddenly thought of Marius: "What!" said she, "I do not think of him now."

In the course of that very week she noticed, passing before the grated gate of the garden, a very handsome officer of lancers, waist like a wasp, ravishing uniform, cheeks like a young girl's, sabre under his arm, waxed mustaches, polished schapska. Moreover, fair hair, full blue eyes, plump, vain, insolent, and pretty face; the very opposite of Marius. A cigar in his mouth. Cosette thought that this officer doubtless belonged to the regiment in barracks on the Rue de Babylone.

The next day she saw him pass again. She noticed the hour.

Dating from this time, was it chance? she saw him pass almost every day.

The officer's comrades perceived that there was, in this garden so "badly kept," behind that wretched old-fashioned grating, a pretty creature that always happened to be visible on the passage of the handsome lieutenant, who

is not unknown to the reader, and whose name was Théodule Gillenormand.

"Stop!" said they to him. "Here is a little girl who has her eye upon you; why don't you look at her?"

"Do you suppose I have the time," answered the lancer, "to look at all the girls who look at me?"

This was the very time when Marius was descending gloomily toward agony, and saying: "If I could only see her again before I die!" Had his wish been realized, had he seen Cosette at that moment looking at a lancer, he would not have been able to utter a word, and would have expired of grief.

Whose fault was it? Nobody's.

Marius was of that temperament which sinks into grief and remains there; Cosette was of that which plunges in and comes out again.

Cosette, indeed, was passing that dangerous moment, the fatal phase of feminine reverie abandoned to itself, when the heart of an isolated young girl resembles the tendrils of a vine which seize hold, as chance determines, of the capital of a column or the sign-post of a tavern. A hurried and decisive moment, critical for every orphan, whether she be poor or whether she be rich, for riches do not defend against a bad choice; misalliances are formed very high; the real misalliance is that of souls; and, even as more than one unknown young man, without name or birth or fortune, is a marble column which sustains a temple of grand sentiments and grand ideas, so you may find a satisfied and opulent man of the world, with polished boots and varnished speech; who, if you look, not at the exterior, but the interior, that is to say, at what is reserved for the wife, is nothing but a stupid joist, darkly haunted by violent, impure, and debauched passions; the sign-post of a tavern.

What was there in Cosette's soul? A soothed or sleeping passion; love in a wavering state; something which was limpid, shining, disturbed to a certain depth, gloomy below. The image of the handsome officer was reflected from the surface. Was there a memory at the bottom? deep at the bottom? Perhaps. Cosette did not know.

A singular incident followed.

II

FEARS OF COSETTE

IN the first fortnight in April, Jean Valjean went on a journey. This, we know, happened with him from time to time, at very long intervals. He remained absent one or two days at the most. Where did he go? nobody knew, not even Cosette. Once only, on one of these trips, she had accompanied him in a fiacre as far as the corner of a little cul-de-sac, on which she read: "*Impasse de la Planchette*." There he got out and the fiacre took Cosette back to the Rue de Babylone. It was generally when money was needed for the household expenses that Jean Valjean made these little journeys.

Jean Valjean, then, was absent. He had said: "I shall be back in three days."

In the evening, Cosette was alone in the parlor. To amuse herself she had opened her piano and begun to sing, playing an accompaniment, the chorus from "Euryanthe": "Hunters wandering in the woods!" which is perhaps the finest piece in all music.

All at once it seemed to her that she heard a step in the garden.

It could not be her father, he was absent; it could not be Toussaint, she was in bed. It was ten o'clock at night,

She went to the window-shutter, which was closed, and put her ear to it.

It appeared to her that it was a man's step, and that he was treading very softly.

She ran immediately up to the first story, into her room, opened a slide in her blind, and looked into the garden. The moon was full. She could see as plainly as in broad day.

There was nobody there.

She opened the window. The garden was absolutely silent, and all that she could see of the street was as deserted as it always was.

Cosette thought she had been mistaken. She had imagined she heard this noise. It was a hallucination produced by Weber's sombre and majestic chorus, which

opens before the mind startling depths, which trembles before the eye like a bewildering forest, and in which we hear the crackling of the dead branches beneath the anxious step of the hunters dimly seen in the twilight.

She thought no more about it.

Moreover, Cosette by nature was not easily startled. There was in her veins the blood of the gypsy and of the adventuress who goes barefoot. It must be remembered she was rather a lark than a dove. She was wild and brave at heart.

The next day, not so late after nightfall, she was walking in the garden. In the midst of the confused thoughts which filled her mind she thought she heard for a moment a sound like the sound of the evening before, as if somebody were walking in the darkness under the trees, not very far from her, but she said to herself that nothing is more like a step in the grass than the rustling of two limbs against each other, and she paid no attention to it. Moreover, she saw nothing.

She left "the bush"; she had to cross a little green grass-plot to reach the steps. The moon, which had just risen behind her, projected, as Cosette came out from the shrubbery, her shadow before her upon this grass-plot.

Cosette stood still, terrified.

By the side of her shadow, the moon marked out distinctly upon the sward another shadow singularly frightful and terrible, a shadow with a round hat.

It was like the shadow of a man who might have been standing in the edge of the shrubbery, a few steps behind Cosette.

For a moment she was unable to speak or cry or call or stir or turn her head.

At last she summoned up all her courage and resolutely turned round.

There was nobody there.

She looked upon the ground. The shadow had disappeared.

She returned into the shrubbery, boldly hunted through the corners, went as far as the gate, and found nothing.

She felt her blood run cold. Was this also a hallucination? What! two days in succession? One hallucination may pass, but two hallucinations? What made her

most anxious was that the shadow was certainly not a phantom. Phantoms never wear round hats.

The next day Jean Valjean returned. Cosette narrated to him what she thought she had heard and seen. She expected to be reassured, and that her father would shrug his shoulders and say: "You are a foolish little girl."

Jean Valjean became anxious.

"It may be nothing," said he to her.

He left her under some pretext and went into the garden, and she saw him examining the gate very closely.

In the night she awoke; now she was certain, and she distinctly heard somebody walking very near the steps under her window. She ran to her slide and opened it.

There was in fact a man in the garden with a big club in his hand. Just as she was about to cry out the moon lighted up the man's face. It was her father.

She went back to bed, saying: "So he is really anxious!"

Jean Valjean passed that night in the garden and the two nights following. Cosette saw him through the hole in her shutter.

The third night the moon was smaller and rose later; it might have been one o'clock in the morning; she heard a loud burst of laughter and her father's voice calling her: "Cosette!"

She sprang out of bed, threw on her dressing-gown and opened her window.

Her father was below on the grass-plot.

"I woke you up to show you," said he. "Look, here is your shadow in a round hat."

And he pointed to a shadow on the sward made by the moon, and which really bore a close resemblance to the appearance of a man in a round hat. It was a figure produced by a sheet-iron stove-pipe with a cap which rose above a neighboring roof.

Cosette also began to laugh, all her gloomy suppositions fell to the ground, and the next day while breakfasting with her father she made merry over the mysterious garden haunted by shadows of stove-pipes.

Jean Valjean became entirely calm again; as to Cosette, she did not notice very carefully whether the stove-pipe was really in the direction of the shadow which she had seen, or thought she saw, and whether the moon was in

the same part of the sky. She made no question about the oddity of a stove-pipe which is afraid of being caught in the act, and which retires when you look at its shadow, for the shadow had disappeared when Cosette turned round, and Cosette had really believed that she was certain of that. Cosette was fully reassured. The demonstration appeared to her complete, and the idea that there could have been anybody walking in the garden that evening or that night no longer entered her head.

A few days afterward, however, a new incident occurred.

III

ENRICHED BY THE COMMENTARIES OF TOUSSAINT

IN the garden near the grated gate, on the street, there was a stone seat protected from the gaze of the curious by a hedge, but which, nevertheless, by an effort the arm of a passer could reach through the grating and the hedge.

One evening in this same month of April Jean Valjean had gone out; Cosette, after sunset, had sat down on this seat. The wind was freshening in the trees, Cosette was musing; a vague sadness was coming over her little by little, that invincible sadness which evening gives and which comes, perhaps, who knows? from the mystery of the tomb half-opened at that hour.

Fantine was, perhaps, in that shadow.

Cosette rose, slowly made the round of the garden, walking in the grass which was wet with dew, and saying to herself through the kind of melancholy somnambulism in which she was enveloped: "One really needs wooden shoes for the garden at this hour. I shall catch cold."

She returned to the seat.

Just as she was sitting down she noticed in the place she had left a stone of considerable size, which evidently was not there the moment before.

Cosette reflected upon this stone, asking herself what it meant. Suddenly the idea that this stone did not come upon the seat of itself, that somebody had put it there, that an arm had passed through that grating, this idea came to her and made her afraid. It was a genuine fear this time; there was the stone. No doubt was possible,

she did not touch it, fled without daring to look behind her, took refuge in the house, and immediately shut the glass door of the stairs with shutter, bar, and bolt. She asked Toussaint:

"Has my father come in?"

"Not yet, mademoiselle."

(We have noticed once for all Toussaint's stammering. Let us be permitted to indicate it no longer. We dislike the musical notation of an infirmity.)

Jean Valjean, a man given to thought and a night-walker, frequently did not return till quite late.

"Toussaint," resumed Cosette, "you are careful in the evening to bar the shutters well, upon the garden at least, and to really put the little iron things into the little rings which fasten?"

"Oh! never fear, mademoiselle."

Toussaint did not fail, and Cosette well knew it, but she could not help adding:

"Because it is so solitary about here!"

"For that matter," said Toussaint, "that is true. We would be assassinated before we would have time to say boo! And then, monsieur doesn't sleep in the house. But don't be afraid, mademoiselle, I fasten the windows like Bastiles. Lone women! I am sure it is enough to make us shudder. Just imagine it! to see men come into the room at night and say to you: 'Hush!' and set themselves to cutting your throat. It isn't so much the dying; people die, that is all right; we know very well that we must die; but it is the horror of having such people touch you. And then their knives, they must cut badly! O God!"

"Be still," said Cosette. "Fasten everything well."

Cosette, dismayed by the melodrama improvised by Toussaint, and perhaps also by the memory of the apparitions of the previous week which came back to her, did not even dare to say to her: "Go and look at the stone which somebody has laid on the seat!" for fear of opening the garden door again, and lest the men would come in. She had all the doors and windows carefully closed, made Toussaint go over the whole house from cellar to garret, shut herself up in her room, drew her bolts, looked under her bed, lay down, and slept badly. All night she saw the stone big as a mountain and full of caves.

At sunrise—the peculiarity of sunrise is to make us laugh at all our terrors of the night, and our laugh is always proportioned to the fear we have had—at sunrise Cosette, on waking, looked upon her fright as upon a nightmare, and said to herself: “What have I been dreaming about? This is like those steps which I thought I heard at night last week in the garden! It is like the shadow of the stove-pipe! And am I going to be a coward now?”

The sun, which shone through the cracks of the shutters and made the damask curtains purple, reassured her to such an extent that it all vanished from her thoughts, even the stone.

“There was no stone on the bench, any more than there was a man with a round hat in the garden; I dreamed the stone as I did the rest.”

She dressed herself, went down to the garden, ran to the bench, and felt a cold sweat. The stone was there.

But this was only for a moment. What is fright by night is a curiosity by day.

“Pshaw!” said she, “now let us see.”

She raised the stone, which was pretty large. There was something underneath which resembled a letter.

It was a white paper envelope. Cosette seized it; there was no address on the one side, no wafer on the other. Still the envelope, although open, was not empty. Papers could be seen in it.

Cosette examined it. There was no more fright, there was curiosity no more; there was a beginning of anxious interest.

Cosette took out of the envelope what it contained, a quire of paper, each page of which was numbered and contained a few lines written in a rather pretty handwriting, thought Cosette, and very fine.

Cosette looked for a name, there was none; a signature, there was none. To whom was it addressed? To her probably, since a hand had placed the packet upon her seat. From whom did it come? An irresistible fascination took possession of her; she endeavored to turn her eyes away from these leaves which trembled in her hand; she looked at the sky, the street, the acacias all steeped in light, some pigeons which were flying about a neighboring roof,

then all at once her eye eagerly sought the manuscript, and she said to herself that she must know what there was in it.

This is what she read:

IV

A HEART UNDER A STONE

THE reduction of the universe to a single being, the expansion of a single being even to God, this is love.

Love is the salutation of the angel to the stars.

How sad is the soul when it is sad from love!

What a void is the absence of the being who alone fills the world! Oh! how true it is that the beloved being becomes God! One would conceive that God would be jealous if the Father of all had not evidently made creation for the soul, and the soul for love.

A glimpse of a smile under a white crape hat with a lilac coronet is enough for the soul to enter into the palace of dreams.

God is behind all things, but all things hide God. Things are black, creatures are opaque. To love a being is to render her transparent.

Certain thoughts are prayers. There are moments when whatever be the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees.

Separated lovers deceive absence by a thousand chimerical things which still have their reality. They are prevented from seeing each other, they can not write to each other; they find a multitude of mysterious means of correspondence. They commission the song of the birds, the perfume of flowers, the laughter of children, the light of the sun, the sighs of the wind, the beams of the stars, the whole creation. And why not? All the works of God were made to serve love. Love is powerful enough to charge all nature with its messages.

O Spring! thou art a letter which I write to her.

The future belongs still more to the heart than to the mind. To love is the only thing which can occupy and fill up eternity. The infinite requires the inexhaustible.

Love partakes of the soul itself. It is of the same nature. Like it, it is a divine spark; like it, it is incorruptible, indivisible, imperishable. It is a point of fire which is within us, which is immortal

and infinite, which nothing can limit and which nothing can extinguish. We feel it burn even in the marrow of our bones, and we see it radiate even to the depths of the sky.

O love! adoration's light of two minds which comprehend each other; of two hearts which are interchanged; of two glances which interpenetrate! You will come to me, will you not, happiness? Walks together in the solitudes! Days blessed and radiant! I have sometimes dreamed that from time to time hours detached themselves from the life of the angels and came here below to pass through the destiny of men.

God can add nothing to the happiness of those who love one another but to give them unending duration. After a life of love, an eternity of love is an augmentation indeed; but to increase in its intensity the ineffable felicity which love gives to the soul in this world is impossible, even with God. God is the plenitude of heaven; love is the plenitude of man.

You look at a star from two motives, because it is luminous and because it is impenetrable. You have at your side a softer radiance and a greater mystery—woman.

We all, whoever we may be, have our respirable beings. If they fail us, the air fails us, we stifle, then we die. To die for lack of love is horrible—the asphyxia of the soul.

When love has melted and mingled two beings into an angelic and sacred unity, the secret of life is found for them; they are then but the two terms of a single destiny; they are then but the two wings of a single spirit. Love, soar!

The day that a woman who is passing before you sheds a light upon you as she goes, you are lost, you love. You have then but one thing to do; to think of her so earnestly that she will be compelled to think of you.

What love begins can be finished only by God.

True love is in despair and in raptures over a glove lost or a handkerchief found, and it requires eternity for its devotion and its hopes. It is composed at the same time of the infinitely great and the infinitely small.

If you are stone, be loadstone; if you are plant, be sensitive; if you are man, be love.

Nothing suffices love. We have happiness, we wish for paradise; we have paradise, we wish for heaven.

O ye who love each other, all this is in love. Be wise enough to find it. Love has, as much as heaven, contemplation, and more than heaven, passionate delight.

"Does she still come to the Luxembourg?" "No, monsieur." "She hears Mass in this church, does she not?" "She comes here no more." "Does she still live in this house?" "She has moved away!" "Whither has she gone to live?" "She did not say."

What a gloomy thing not to know the address of one's soul!

Love has its childlikenesses, the other passions have their littlenesses. Shame on the passions which render man little! Honor to that which makes him a child!

There is a strange thing, do you know it? I am in the night. There is a being who has gone away and carried the heavens with her.

Oh! to be laid side by side in the same tomb, hand clasped in hand, and from time to time, in the darkness, to caress a finger gently, that would suffice for my eternity.

You who suffer because you love, love still more. To die of love is to live by it.

Love. A sombre, starry transfiguration, is mingled with this crucifixion. There is ecstasy in the agony.

O joy of the birds! It is because they have their nest that they have their song.

Love is a celestial respiration of the air of paradise.

Deep hearts, wise minds take life as God has made it; it is a long trial, an unintelligible preparation for the unknown destiny. This destiny, the true one, begins for man at the first step in the interior of the tomb. Then something appears to him and he begins to discern the definite. The definite! Think of this word. The living see the infinite; the definite reveals itself only to the dead. Meantime, love and suffer, hope and contemplate. Woe, alas! to him who shall have loved bodies, forms, appearances only. Death will take all from him. Try to love souls, you shall find them again.

I met in the street a very poor young man who was in love. His hat was old, his coat was threadbare—there were holes at his elbows; the water passed through his shoes and the stars through his soul.

What a grand thing to be loved! What a grander thing still to love! The heart becomes heroic through passion. It is no longer composed of anything but what is pure; it no longer rests upon any-

thing but what is elevated and great. An unworthy thought can no more spring up in it than a nettle upon a glacier. The soul lofty and serene, inaccessible to common passions and common emotions, rising above the clouds and the shadows of this world, its follies, its falsehoods, its hates, its vanities, its miseries, inhabits the blue of the skies, and only feels more the deep and subterranean commotions of destiny as the summit of the mountain feels the quaking of the earth.

Were there not some one who loved the sun would be extinguished.

V

COSETTE AFTER THE LETTER

DURING the reading Cosette entered gradually into reverie. At the moment she raised her eyes from the last line of the last page the handsome officer—it was his hour—passed triumphant before the grating. Cosette thought him hideous.

She began again to contemplate the letter. It was written in a ravishing handwriting, thought Cosette; in the same hand, but with different inks, sometimes very black, sometimes pale, as ink is put into the inkstand, and, consequently, on different days. It was, then, a thought which had poured itself out there, sigh by sigh, irregularly, without order, without choice, without aim, at hazard. Cosette had never read anything like it. This manuscript, in which she found still more clearness than obscurity, had the effect upon her of a half-opened sanctuary. Each of these mysterious lines was resplendent to her eyes and flooded her heart with a strange light. The education which she had received had always spoken to her of the soul and never of love, almost like one who should speak of the brand and not of the flame. This manuscript of fifteen pages revealed to her suddenly and sweetly the whole of love, the sorrow, the destiny, the life, the eternity, the beginning, the end. It was like a hand which had opened and thrown suddenly upon her a handful of sunbeams. She felt in these few lines a passionate, ardent, generous, honest nature, a consecrated will, an immense sorrow and a boundless hope, an oppressed heart, a glad ecstasy. What was this manuscript? a letter. A

letter with no address, no name, no date, no signature, intense and disinterested, an enigma composed of truths, a message of love made to be brought by an angel and read by a virgin, a rendezvous given beyond the earth, a love-letter from a phantom to a shade. He was a calm yet exhausted absent one, who seemed ready to take refuge in death and who sent to the absent Her the secret of destiny, the key of life—love. It had been written with the foot in the grave and the finger in heaven. These lines, fallen one by one upon the paper, were what might be called drops of soul.

Now, these pages, from whom could they come? Who could have written them?

Cosette did not hesitate for a moment. One single man. He!

Day had revived in her mind; all had appeared again. She felt a wonderful joy and deep anguish. It was he! he who wrote to her! he who was there! he whose arm had passed through that grating! While she was forgetting him he had found her again! But had she forgotten him? No, never! She was mad to have thought so for a moment. She had always loved him, always adored him. The fire had been covered and had smouldered for a time, but she clearly saw it had only sunk in the deeper and now it burst out anew and fired her whole being. This letter was like a spark dropped from that other soul into hers. She felt the conflagration rekindling. She was penetrated by every word of the manuscript: "Oh, yes!" said she, "how I recognize all this! This is what I had already read in his eyes."

As she finished it for the third time Lieutenant Théodule returned before the grating and rattled his spurs on the pavement. Cosette mechanically raised her eyes. She thought him flat, stupid, silly, useless, conceited, odious, impertinent, and very ugly. The officer thought it his duty to smile. She turned away insulted and indignant. She would have been glad to have thrown something at his head.

She fled, went back to the house and shut herself up in her room to read over the manuscript again, to learn it by heart and to muse. When she had read it well she kissed it and put it in her bosom.

It was done. Cosette had fallen back into the profound seraphic love. The abyss of Eden had reopened.

All that day Cosette was in a sort of stupefaction. She could hardly think, her ideas were like a tangled skein in her brain. She could really conjecture nothing; she hoped, while yet trembling, what vague things! She dared to promise herself nothing and she would refuse herself nothing. Pallors passed over her face and chills over her body. It seemed to her at moments that she was entering the chimerical; she said to herself: "Is it real?" then she felt of the beloved paper under her dress, she pressed it against her heart, she felt its corners upon her flesh, and if Jean Valjean had seen her at that moment he would have shuddered before that luminous and unknown joy which flashed from her eyes. "Oh, yes!" thought she, "it is, indeed, he! this comes from him for me!"

And she said to herself that an intervention of angels, that a celestial chance had restored him to her.

Oh, transfigurations of love! Oh, dreams! this celestial chance, this intervention of angels, was that bullet of bread thrown by one robber to another robber, from the Charlemagne Court to La Fosse aux Lions, over the roofs of La Force.

VI

THE OLD ARE MADE TO GO OUT WHEN CONVENIENT

WHEN evening came Jean Valjean went out; Cosette dressed herself. She arranged her hair in the manner which best became her and she put on a dress, the neck of which, as it had received one cut of the scissors too much, and as, by this slope, it allowed the turn of the neck to be seen, was, as young girls say, "a little immodest." It was not the least in the world immodest, but it was prettier than otherwise. She did all this without knowing why.

Did she intend to go out? No.

Did she expect a visitor? No.

At dusk she went down to the garden. Toussaint was busy in her kitchen, which looked out upon the back yard.

She began to walk under the branches, putting them aside with her hand from time to time, because there were some that were very low.

She thus reached the seat.

The stone was still there.

She sat down and laid her soft white hand upon that stone as if she would caress it and thank it.

All at once she had that indefinable impression which we feel, though we see nothing, when there is somebody standing behind us.

She turned her head and arose.

It was he.

He was bareheaded. He appeared pale and thin. She hardly discerned his black dress. The twilight dimmed his fine forehead and covered his eyes with darkness. He had, under a veil of incomparable sweetness, something of death and of night. His face was lighted by the light of a dying day and by the thought of a departing soul.

It seemed as if he was not yet a phantom and was now no longer a man.

His hat was lying a few steps distant in the shrubbery.

Cosette, ready to faint, did not utter a cry. She drew back slowly, for she felt herself attracted forward. He did not stir. Through the sad and ineffable something which enwrapped him, she felt the look of his eyes, which she did not see.

Cosette, in retreating, encountered a tree, and leaned against it. But for this tree she would have fallen.

Then she heard his voice, that voice which she had never really heard, hardly rising above the rustling of the leaves, and murmuring:

“Pardon me, I am here. My heart is bursting, I could not live as I was, I have come. Have you read what I placed there, on this seat? do you recognize me at all? do not be afraid of me. It is a long time now; do you remember the day when you looked upon me? it was at the Luxembourg, near the gladiator. And the days when you passed before me? It was the 16th of June and the 2d of July. It will soon be a year. For a very long time now I have not seen you at all. I asked the chair-keeper, she told me that she saw you no more. You lived in the Rue de l'Ouest, on the third floor front, in a new house; you see that I know! I followed you. What was I to do? And then you disappeared. I thought I saw you pass once when I was reading the paper under the arches of the

Odéon. I ran. But no. It was a person who had a hat like yours. At night I come here. Do not be afraid, nobody sees me. I come for a near look at your windows. I walk very softly that you may not hear, for perhaps you would be afraid. The other evening I was behind you, you turned round, I fled. Once I heard you sing. I was happy. Does it disturb you that I should hear you sing through the shutter? it can do you no harm. It can not, can it? See, you are my angel, let me come sometimes; I believe I am going to die. If you but knew! I adore you! Pardon me, I am talking to you, I do not know what I am saying to you, perhaps I annoy you, do I annoy you?"

"Oh, mother!" said she.

And she sank down upon herself as if she were dying.

He caught her, she fell, he caught her in his arms, he grasped her tightly, unconscious of what he was doing. He supported her even while tottering himself. He felt as if his head were enveloped in smoke; flashes of light passed through his eyelids; his ideas vanished; it seemed to him that he was performing a religious act, and that he was committing a profanation. Moreover, he did not feel one passionate emotion for this ravishing woman, whose form he felt against his heart. He was lost in love.

She took his hand and laid it on her heart. He felt the paper there, and stammered:

"You love me, then?"

She answered in a voice so low that it was no more than a breath which could scarcely be heard:

"Hush! you know it!"

And she hid her blushing head in the bosom of the proud and intoxicated young man.

He fell upon the seat, she by his side. There were no more words. The stars were beginning to shine. How was it that their lips met? How is it that the bird sings, that the snow melts, that the rose opens, that May blooms, that the dawn whitens behind the black trees on the shivering summit of the hills?

One kiss, and that was all.

Both trembled, and they looked at each other in the darkness with brilliant eyes.

They felt neither the fresh night, nor the cold stone, nor the damp ground, nor the wet grass, they looked at each

other, and their hearts were full of thought. They had clasped hands without knowing it.

She did not ask him, she did not even think of it, in what way and by what means he had succeeded in penetrating into the garden. It seemed so natural to her that he should be there!

From time to time Marius' knee touched Cosette's knee, which gave them both a thrill.

At intervals Cosette faltered out a word. Her soul trembled upon her lips like a drop of dew upon a flower.

Gradually they began to talk. Overflow succeeded to silence, which is fulness. The night was serene and splendid above their heads. These two beings, pure as spirits, told each other all their dreams, their frenzies, their ecstasies, their chimeras, their despondencies, how they had adored each other from afar, how they had longed for each other, their despair when they had ceased to see each other. They confided to each other in an intimacy of the ideal, which even now nothing could have increased, all that was most hidden and most mysterious of themselves. They related to each other, with a candid faith in their illusions, all that love, youth, and that remnant of childhood which was theirs, suggested to their thought! These two hearts poured themselves out into each other, so that at the end of an hour it was the young man who had the young girl's soul and the young girl the soul of the young man. They interpenetrated, they enchanted, they dazzled each other.

When they had finished, when they had told each other everything, she laid her head upon his shoulder and asked him:

"What is your name?"

"My name is Marius," said he. "And yours?"

"My name is Cosette."

BOOK SIXTH—LITTLE GAVROCHE

I

A MALEVOLENT TRICK OF THE WIND

SINCE 1823, and while the Montfermeil chop-house was gradually foundering and being swallowed up, not in the abyss of a bankruptcy, but in the sink of petty debts, the Thenardier couple had had two more children; both male. These made five; two girls and three boys. It was a good many.

The Thenardiess had disembarrassed herself of the two last, while yet at an early age and quite small, with singular good fortune.

Disembarrassed is the word. There was in this woman but a fragment of nature. A phenomenon, moreover, of which there is more than one example. Like Mme. la Maréchale de la Mothé Houdancourt, the Thenardiess was a mother only to her daughters. Her maternity ended there. Her hatred of the human race began with her boys. On the side toward her sons, her malignity was precipitous, and her heart had at that spot a fearful escarpment. As we have seen, she detested the eldest; she execrated the two others. Why? Because. The most terrible of motives and the most unanswerable of responses: "Because I have no use for a squalling pack of children," said this mother.

We must explain how the Thenardiers had succeeded in disencumbering themselves of their two youngest children, and even in deriving a profit from them.

This Magnon girl, spoken of some pages back, was the same who had succeeded in getting her two children endowed by good man Gillenormand. She lived on the Quai des Célestins, at the corner of that ancient Rue du Petit Muse, which has done what it could to change its evil renown into good odor. Many will remember that great epidemic of croup which desolated, thirty-five years ago, the quartiers bordering on the Seine at Paris, and of which science took advantage to experiment on a large scale as to the efficacy of insufflations of alum, now so happily replaced by the tincture of iodine externally applied. In

that epidemic Magnon lost her two boys, still very young, on the same day, one in the morning, the other at night. This was a blow. These children were precious to their mother; they represented eighty francs a month. These eighty francs were paid with great exactness, in the name of M. Gillenormand, by his rent agent, M. Barge, retired constable, Rue du Roi de Sicile. The children dead, the income was buried. Magnon sought for an expedient. In that dark masonry of evil of which she was a part, everything is known, secrets are kept, and each aids the other. Magnon needed two children; the Thenardiess had two. Same sex, same age. Good arrangement for one, good investment for the other. The little Thenardiers became the little Magnons. Magnon left the Quai des Célestins and went to live in the Rue Clocheperce. In Paris, the identity which binds an individual to himself is broken from one street to another.

The government, not being notified, did not object, and the substitution took place in the most natural way in the world. Only Thenardier demanded, for this loan of children, ten francs a month, which Magnon promised, and even paid. It need not be said that M. Gillenormand continued to pay. He came twice a year to see the little ones. He did not perceive the change. "Monsieur," said Magnon to him, "how much they look like you."

Thenardier, to whom avatars were easy, seized this opportunity to become Jondrette. His two girls and Gavroche had hardly time to perceive that they had two little brothers. At a certain depth of misery, men are possessed by a sort of spectral indifference, and look upon their fellow-beings as upon goblins. Your nearest relatives are often but vague forms of shadow for you, hardly distinct from the nebulous background of life, and easily reblended with the invisible.

On the evening of the day she had delivered her two little ones to Magnon, expressing her willingness freely to renounce them forever, the Thenardiess had, or feigned to have, a scruple. She said to her husband: "But this is abandoning one's children!" Thenardier, magisterial and phlegmatic, cauterized the scruple with this phrase: "Jean Jacques Rousseau did better!" From scruple the mother passed to anxiety: "But suppose the police come to tor-

ment us? What we have done here, M. Thenardier, say now, is it lawful?" Thenardier answered: "Everything is lawful. Nobody will see it but the sky. Moreover, with children who have not a sou, nobody has any interest to look closely into it."

Magnon had a kind of elegance in crime. She made a toilet. She shared her rooms, furnished in a gaudy, yet wretched style, with a shrewd Frenchified English thief. This naturalized Parisian English woman, recommended by very rich connections, intimately acquainted with the medals of the Bibliothèque and the diamonds of Mdlle. Mars, afterward became famous in the judicial records. She was called "Mamselle Miss."

The two little ones who had fallen to Magnon had nothing to complain of. Recommended by the eighty francs, they were taken care of, as everything is which is a matter of business; not badly clothed, not badly fed, treated almost like "little gentlemen," better with the false mother than with the true. Magnon acted the lady and did not talk argot before them.

They passed some years thus; Thenardier augured well of it. It occurred to him one day to say to Magnon, who brought him his monthly ten francs: "The father must give them an education."

Suddenly, these two poor children, till then well cared for, even by their ill-fortune, were abruptly thrown out into life, and compelled to begin it.

A numerous arrest of malefactors like that of the Jondrette garret, necessarily complicated with ulterior searches and seizures, is really a disaster for this hideous occult counter-society which lives beneath public society; an event like this involves every description of misfortune in that gloomy world. The catastrophe of the Thenardiers produced the catastrophe of Magnon.

One day, a short time after Magnon handed Eponine the note relative to the Rue Plumet, there was a sudden descent of the police in the Rue Clocheperce. Magnon was arrested as well as Mamselle Miss, and the whole household, which was suspicious, was included in the haul. The two little boys were playing at the time in a back yard, and saw nothing of the raid. When they wanted to go in they found the door closed and the house empty. A cob-

bler, whose shop was opposite, called them and handed them a paper which "their mother" had left for them. On the paper there was an address: "M. Barge, rent agent, Rue du Roi de Sicile, No. 8." The man of the shop said to them: "You don't live here any more. Go there—it is near by—the first street to the left. Ask your way with this paper."

The children started, the elder leading the younger, and holding in his hand the paper which was to be their guide. He was cold, and his benumbed little fingers had but an awkward grasp, and held the paper loosely. As they were turning out of the Rue Clocheperce a gust of wind snatched it from him, and, as night was coming on, the child could not find it again.

They began to wander, as chance led them, in the streets.

II

IN WHICH LITTLE GAVROCHE TAKES ADVANTAGE OF NAPOLEON THE GREAT

SPRING in Paris is often accompanied with keen and sharp north winds, by which one is not exactly frozen, but frost-bitten; these winds, which mar the most beautiful days, have precisely the effect of those currents of cold air which enter a warm room through the cracks of an ill-closed window or door. It seems as if the dreary door of winter were partly open and the wind were coming in at it. In the spring of 1832, the time when the first great epidemic of this century broke out in Europe, these winds were sharper and more piercing than ever. A door still more icy than that of winter was ajar. The door of the sepulchre. The breath of the cholera was felt in those winds.

In the meteorological point of view these cold winds had this peculiarity, that they did not exclude a strong electric tension. Storms accompanied by thunder and lightning were frequent during this time.

One evening, when these winds were blowing harshly, to that degree that January seemed returned, and the bourgeois had resumed their cloaks, little Gavroche, always shivering cheerfully under his rags, was standing, as

if in ecstasy, before a wig-maker's shop in the neighborhood of the Orme St. Gervais. He was adorned with a woman's woolen shawl, picked up nobody knows where, of which he had made a muffler. Little Gavroche appeared to be intensely admiring a wax bride, with bare neck and a head-dress of orange flowers, which was revolving behind the sash, exhibiting, between two lamps, its smile to the passers; but in reality he was watching the shop to see if he could not "chiper" a cake of soap from the front, which he would afterward sell for a sou to a hair-dresser in the banlieue. It often happened that he breakfasted upon one of these cakes. He called this kind of work, for which he had some talent, "shaving the barbers."

As he was contemplating the bride and squinting at the cake of soap he muttered between his teeth: "Tuesday. It isn't Tuesday. Is it Tuesday? Perhaps it is Tuesday. Yes, it is Tuesday."

Nobody ever discovered to what this monologue related.

If, perchance, this soliloquy referred to the last time he had dined, it was three days before, for it was then Friday.

The barber in his shop, warmed by a good stove, was shaving a customer, and casting from time to time a look toward this enemy, this frozen and brazen *gamin*, who had both hands in his pockets, but his wits evidently out of their sheath.

While Gavroche was examining the bride, the windows, and the Windsor soap, two children of unequal height, rather neatly dressed and still smaller than he, one appearing to be seven years old, the other five, timidly turned the knob of the door and entered the shop, asking for something, charity, perhaps, in a plaintive manner which rather resembled a moan than a prayer. They both spoke at once, and their words were unintelligible because sobs choked the voice of the younger and the cold made the elder's teeth chatter. The barber turned with a furious face, and, without leaving his razor, crowding back the elder with his left hand and the little one with his knees, pushed them into the street and shut the door, saying:

"Coming and freezing people for nothing!"

The two children went on, crying. Meanwhile a cloud had come up; it began to rain.

Little Gavroche ran after them and accosted them:

"What is the matter with you little brats?"

"We don't know where to sleep," answered the elder.

"Is that all?" said Gavroche. "That is nothing. Does anybody cry for that? Are they canaries, then?"

And assuming, through his slightly bantering superiority, a tone of softened authority and gentle protection:

"*Momacques*, come with me."

"Yes, monsieur," said the elder.

And the two children followed him as they would have followed an archbishop. They had stopped crying.

Gavroche led them up the Rue St. Antoine in the direction of the Bastile.

Gavroche, as he traveled on, cast an indignant and retrospective glance at the barber's shop:

"He has no heart, that *merlan*," he muttered. "He is an *Angliche*."

A girl, seeing them all three marching in a row, Gavroche at the head, broke into a loud laugh. This laugh was lacking in respect for the group.

"Good-day, Mamselle Omnibus," said Gavroche to her.

A moment afterward, the barber recurring to him, he added: "I am mistaken in the animal; he isn't a *merlan*, he is a snake. Wig-maker, I am going after a locksmith, and I will have a rattle made for your tail."

This barber had made him aggressive. He apostrophized, as he leaped across a brook, a portress with a beard fit to meet Faust upon the Brocken, who had her broom in her hand.

"Madame," said he to her, "you have come out with your horse, have you?"

And, upon this, he splashed the polished boots of a passer with mud.

"Whelp!" cried the man, furious.

Gavroche lifted his nose above his shawl.

"Monsieur complains?"

"Of you!" said the passer.

"The bureau is closed," said Gavroche, "I receive no more complaints."

Meanwhile, continuing up the street, he saw, quite frozen under a *porte-cochère*, a beggar girl of thirteen or fourteen, whose clothes were so short that her knees could

be seen. The little girl was beginning to be too big a girl for that. Growth plays you such tricks. The skirt becomes short at the moment that nudity becomes indecent.

"Poor girl!" said Gavroche. "She hasn't even any breeches. But here, take this."

And, taking off all that good woolen which he had about his neck, he threw it upon the bony and purple shoulders of the beggar girl, where the muffler again became a shawl.

The little girl looked at him with an astonished appearance and received the shawl in silence. At a certain depth of distress the poor in their stupor groan no longer over evil, and are no longer thankful for good.

This done.

"Brrr!" said Gavroche, shivering worse than St. Martin, who at least kept half his cloak.

At this "brrr," the storm, redoubling its fury, became violent. These malignant skies punish good actions.

"Ah!" exclaimed Gavroche, "what does this mean? It rains again! Good God! if this continues I withdraw my subscription."

And he continued his walk.

"It's all the same," added he, casting a glance at the beggar girl who was cuddling herself under the shawl "there is somebody who has a famous peel."

And, looking at the cloud, he cried: "Caught!"

The two children limped along behind him.

As they were passing by one of those thick, grated lattices which indicate a baker's shop, for bread like gold is kept behind iron gratings, Gavroche turned.

"Ah, ah, *mômes*, have we dined?"

"Monsieur," answered the elder, "we have not eaten since early this morning."

"You are, then, without father or mother?" resumed Gavroche majestically.

"Excuse me, monsieur, we have a papa and mamma, but we don't know where they are."

"Sometimes that's better than knowing," said Gavroche, who was a thinker.

"It is two hours now," continued the elder, "that we have been walking; we have been looking for things in every corner, but we can find nothing."

"I know," said Gavroche. "The dogs eat up everything."

He resumed, after a moment's silence: "Ah! we have lost our authors. We don't know now what we have done with them. That won't do, *gamins*. It is stupid to get lost like that for people of any age. Ah, yes, we must *licher* for all that."

Still he asked them no questions. To be without a home, what could be more natural?

The elder of the two *mômes*, almost entirely restored to the quick unconcern of childhood, made this exclamation:

"It is very queer for all that. Mamma had promised to take us to look for some blessed box on Palm Sunday."

"*Neurs*," answered Gavroche.

"Mamma," added the elder, "is a lady who lives with Mamselle Miss."

"*Tanflûte*," replied Gavroche.

Meanwhile he had stopped, and for a few minutes he had been groping and fumbling in all sorts of recesses which he had in his rags.

Finally he raised his head with an air which was only intended for one of satisfaction, but which was in reality triumphant.

"Let us compose ourselves, *momi-gnards*. Here is enough for supper for three."

And he took a sou from one of his pockets.

Without giving the two little boys time for amazement, he pushed them both before him into the baker's shop and laid the sou on the counter, crying: "Boy, five centimes' worth of bread."

The man, who was the master baker himself, took a loaf and a knife.

"In three pieces, boy," resumed Gavroche, and he added with dignity: "There are three of us."

And seeing that the baker, after having examined the three costumes, had taken a black loaf, he thrust his finger deep into his nose with a respiration as imperious as if he had had the great Frederick's pinch of snuff at the end of his thumb, and threw full in the baker's face this indignant apostrophe:

"Whossachuav?"

Those of our readers who may be tempted to see in this

summons of Gavroche to the baker a Russian or Polish word, or one of those savage cries which the Iowas and the Botocudos hurl at each other from one bank of a stream to the other in their solitudes, are informed that it is a phrase which they use every day (they, our readers), and which takes the place of this phrase: "What is that you have?" The baker understood perfectly well and answered:

"Why, it is bread, very good bread of the second quality."

"You mean *larton brutal*," * replied Gavroche, with a calm, cold disdain. "White bread, boy! *larton savonné*. I am treating."

The baker could not help smiling, and while he was cutting the white bread he looked at them in a compassionate manner which offended Gavroche.

"Come, paper cap!" said he, "what are you fathoming us like that for?"

All three placed end to end would hardly have made a fathom.

When the bread was cut the baker put the sou in his drawer, and Gavroche said to the two children:

"*Morfilez*."

The little boys looked at him confounded.

Gavroche began to laugh.

"Ah, stop, that is true, they don't know yet! they are so small."

And he added:

"Eat."

At the same time he handed each of them a piece of bread.

And thinking that the elder, who appeared to him more worthy of his conversation, deserved some special encouragement and ought to be relieved of all hesitation in regard to satisfying his appetite, he added, giving him the largest piece:

"Stick that in your gun."

There was one piece smaller than the other two; he took it for himself.

The poor children were starving, Gavroche included.

* Black bread.

While they were tearing the bread with their fine teeth they encumbered the shop of the baker, who, now that he had received his pay, was regarding them ill-humoredly.

"Come into the street," said Gavroche.

They went on in the direction of the Bastille.

From time to time when they were passing before a lighted shop, the smaller one stopped to look at the time by a leaden watch suspended from his neck by a string.

"Here is decidedly a real canary," said Gavroche.

Then he thoughtfully muttered between his teeth:

"It's all the same, if I had any *mômes* I would hug them tighter than this."

As they finished their pieces of bread and reached the corner of that gloomy Rue des Ballets, at the end of which the low and forbidding wicket of La Force is seen:

"Halloo, is that you, Gavroche?" said somebody.

"Halloo, is that you, Montparnasse?" said Gavroche.

A man had just accosted the *gamin*, and this man was none other than Montparnasse, disguised with blue eyeglasses, but recognizable by Gavroche.

"Mastiff!" continued Gavroche: "you have a peel the color of a flaxseed poultice and blue spectacles like a doctor. You are in style, 'pon the word of an old man."

"Hush!" said Montparnasse, "not so loud."

And he hastily drew Gavroche out of the light of the shops.

The two little boys followed mechanically, holding each other by the hand.

When they were under the black arch of the *porte-cochère*, sheltered from sight and from the rain:

"Do you know where I am going?" inquired Montparnasse.

"To the Abbey of Monte â Regret," * said Gavroche.

"Joker!"

And Montparnasse continued:

"I am going to find Babet."

"Ah!" said Gavroche: "her name is Babet."

Montparnasse lowered his voice.

"Not her, his."

"Ah, Babet!"

* To the scaffold.

"Yes, Babet."

"I thought he was buckled."

"He has slipped the buckle," answered Montparnasse.

And he rapidly related to the *gamin* that, on the morning of that very day, Babet, having been transferred to the conciergerie, had escaped by turning to the left instead of turning to the right in "the vestibule of the examination hall."

Gavroche admired the skill.

"What a dentist!" said he.

Montparnasse added a few particulars in regard to Babet's escape and finished with:

"Oh! that is not all."

Gavroche, while listening, had caught hold of a cane which Montparnasse had in his hand, he had pulled mechanically on the upper part and the blade of a dagger appeared.

"Ah!" said he, pushing the dagger back hastily, "you have brought your gendarme disguised as a bourgeois."

Montparnasse gave him a wink.

"The deuce!" resumed Gavroche: "then you are going to have a tussle with the *cognes*?"

"We don't know," answered Montparnasse with an indifferent air. "It is always well to have a pin about you."

Gavroche insisted:

"What is it you are going to do to-night?"

Montparnasse took up the serious line anew and said, biting his syllables:

"Several things."

And abruptly changing the conversation:

"By the way!"

"What?"

"A story of the other day. Just think of it. I meet a bourgeois. He makes me a present of a sermon and his purse. I put that in my pocket. A minute afterward I feel in my pocket. There is nothing there."

"Except the sermon," said Gavroche.

"But you," resumed Montparnasse, "where are you going now?"

Gavroche showed his two protégés and said:

"I am going to put these children to bed."

"Where do they sleep?"

"At my house."

"Your house? Where is that?"

"At my house."

"You have a room, then?"

"Yes, I have room."

"And where is your room?"

"In the elephant," said Gavroche.

Montparnasse, although by nature not easily astonished, could not restrain an exclamation:

"In the elephant?"

"Well, yes, in the elephant," replied Gavroche, whossematruthat?"

That is also a word in the language which nobody writes and which everybody uses. "Whossematruthat" signifies "What is the matter with that?"

The profound observation of the *gamin* recalled Montparnasse to calmness and good sense. He appeared to return to more respectful sentiments for Gavroche's lodgings.

"Indeed!" said he. "Yes, the elephant. Are you well off there?"

"Very well," said Gavroche. "There, really *chenument*. There are no draughts of wind as there are under the bridges."

"How do you get in?"

"I get in."

"There is a hole, then?" inquired Montparnasse.

"Zounds! But it mustn't be told. It is between the forelegs. The *coqueurs** haven't seen it."

"And you climb up. Yes, I understand."

"In a twinkling, crick, crack, it's done, all alone."

After a moment Gavroche added:

"For these little boys I shall have a ladder."

Montparnasse began to laugh:

"Where the devil did you get these brats?"

Gavroche simply answered:

"They are some *momichards* a wig-maker made me a present of."

Meanwhile Montparnasse had become thoughtful.

"You recognized me very easily," he murmured.

* Spies, policemen.

He took from his pocket two little objects, which were nothing but two quills wrapped in cotton, and introduced one into each nostril. This made him a new nose.

"That changes you," said Gavroche; "you are not so ugly; you ought to keep so all the time."

Montparnasse was a handsome fellow, but Gavroche was a scoffer.

"Joking aside," said Montparnasse, "how do you like that?"

It was also another sound of voice. In the twinkling of an eye Montparnasse had become unrecognizable.

"Oh, play us Punchinello!" exclaimed Gavroche.

The two little ones, who had not been listening till now, they had themselves been so busy in stuffing their fingers into their noses, were attracted by this name and looked upon Montparnasse with dawning joy and admiration.

Unfortunately, Montparnasse was anxious.

He laid his hand on Gavroche's shoulder and said to him, dwelling upon his words:

"Listen to a digression, boy; if I were on the square, with my *dogue*, my *dague*, and my *digue*, and if you were so prodigal as to offer me twenty great sous, I shouldn't refuse to *groupiner** for them; but we are not on Mardi Gras."

This grotesque phrase produced a singular effect upon the *gamin*. He turned hastily, cast his small, sparkling eyes about him with intense attention, and perceived, within a few steps, a sergent-de-ville, whose back was turned to them. Gavroche let an "Ah, yes!" escape him, which he suppressed upon the spot, and shaking Montparnasse's hand:

"Well, good-night," said he. "I am going to my elephant with my *mômes*. On the supposition that you should need me some night, you will come and find me there. I live in the second story. There is no porter. You would ask for M. Gavroche."

"All right," said Montparnasse.

And they separated, Montparnasse making his way toward the Grève and Gavroche toward the Bastille. The little five-year-old, drawn along by his brother, whom Ga-

* To labor.

vroche was drawing along, turned his head back several times to see "Punchinello" going away.

The unintelligible phrase by which Montparnasse had warned Gavroche of the presence of the sergent-de-ville contained no other talisman than the syllable *dig* repeated five or six times under various forms. This syllable *dig*, not pronounced singly, but artistically mingled with the words of a phrase, means: "Take care; we can not talk freely." There was, furthermore, in Montparnasse's phrase a literary beauty which escaped Gavroche; that is, "*my dogue, my dague, and my digue*," an expression of the argot of the Temple, which signifies "*my dog, my knife, and my wife*," very much used among the Pitres and the Queus Rogues of the age of Louis XIV, when Molière wrote and Callot drew.

Twenty years ago there was still to be seen, in the south-east corner of the Place de la Bastille, near the canal basin dug in the ancient ditch of the prison citadel, a grotesque monument, which has now faded away from the memory of Parisians and which is worthy to leave some trace, for it was an idea of the "Member of the Institute, general-in-chief of the army of Egypt."

We say monument, although it was only a rough model. But this rough model itself, a huge plan, a vast carcass of an idea of Napoleon, which two or three successive gusts of wind had carried away and thrown each time further from us, had become historical and had acquired a definiteness which contrasted with its provisional aspect. It was an elephant, forty feet high, constructed of framework and masonry, bearing on its back its tower, which resembled a house, formerly painted green by some house-painter, now painted black by the sun, the rain, and the weather. In that open and deserted corner of the square the broad front of the colossus, his trunk, his tusks, his size, his enormous rump, his four feet like columns, produced at night, under the starry sky, a startling and terrible outline. One knew not what it meant. It was a sort of symbol of the force of the people. It was gloomy, enigmatic, and immense. It was a mysterious and mighty phantom, visibly standing by the side of the invisible spectre of the Bastille.

Few strangers visited this edifice; no passer-by looked at

it. It was falling into ruin; every season the mortar, which was detached from its sides, made hideous wounds upon it. "The ædiles," as they say in fashionable dialect, had forgotten it since 1814. It was there in its corner, gloomy, diseased, crumbling, surrounded by a rotten railing, continually besmeared by drunken coachmen; crevices marked up the belly; a lath was sticking out from the tail; the tall grass came far up between its legs; and as the level of the square had been rising for thirty years all about it, by that slow and continuous movement which insensibly raises the soil of great cities, it was in a hollow, and it seemed as if the earth sank under it. It was huge, contemned, repulsive and superb; ugly to the eye of the bourgeois, melancholy to the eye of the thinker. It partook, to some extent, of a filth soon to be swept away, and, to some extent, of a majesty soon to be decapitated.

As we have said, night changed its appearance. Night is the true medium for everything which is shadowy. As soon as twilight fell the old elephant became transfigured; he assumed a tranquil and terrible form in the fearful serenity of the darkness. Being of the past he was of the night; and this obscurity was fitting to his greatness.

This monument, rude, squat, clumsy, harsh, severe, almost deformed, but certainly majestic, and impressed with a sort of magnificent and savage seriousness, has disappeared, leaving a peaceable reign to the kind of gigantic stove, adorned with its stove-pipe, which has taken the place of the forbidding, nine-towered fortress, almost as the bourgeoisie replaces feudality. It is very natural that a stove should be the symbol of an epoch of which a tea-kettle contains the power. This period will pass away; it is already passing away; we are beginning to understand that if there may be force in a boiler there can be power only in a brain; in other words, that what leads and controls the world is not locomotives, but ideas. Harness the locomotives to the ideas, very well; but do not take the horse for the horseman.

However this may be, to return to the Place de la Bastille, the architect of the elephant had succeeded in making something grand with plaster; the architect of the stove-pipe has succeeded in making something petty with bronze.

This stove-pipe, which was baptized with a sonorous

name and called the Column of July; this would-be monument of an abortive revolution was still, in 1832, enveloped in an immense framework covering, which we, for our part, still regret, and by a large board inclosure, which completed the isolation of the elephant.

It was toward this corner of the square, dimly lighted by the reflection of a distant lamp, that the *gamin* directed the two *mômes*.

We must be permitted to stop here long enough to declare that we are within the simple reality, and that twenty years ago the police tribunals would have had to condemn upon a complaint for vagrancy and breach of a public monument, a child who should have been caught sleeping in the interior even of the elephant of the Bastile. This fact stated, we continue.

As they came near the colossus Gavroche comprehended the effect which the infinitely great may produce upon the infinitely small, and said: "Brats! don't be frightened."

Then he entered through a gap in the fence into the inclosure of the elephant, and helped the *mômes* to crawl through the breach. The two children, a little frightened, followed Gavroche without saying a word, and trusted themselves to that little providence in rags who had given them bread and promised them a lodging.

Lying by the side of the fence was a ladder, which by day was used by the workingmen of the neighboring wood-yard. Gavroche lifted it with singular vigor, and set it up against one of the elephant's forelegs. About the point where the latter ended a sort of black hole could be distinguished in the belly of the colossus.

Gavroche showed the ladder and the hole to his guests and said to them: "Mount and enter."

The two little fellows looked at each other in terror.

"You are afraid, *mômes*!" exclaimed Gavroche.

And he added: "You shall see."

He clasped the elephant's wrinkled foot, and in a twinkling, without deigning to make use of the ladder, he reached the crevice. He entered it as an adder glides into a hole, and disappeared, and a moment afterward the two children saw his pallid face dimly appearing like a faded and wan form, at the edge of the hole full of darkness.

"Well," cried he, "why don't you come up, *momignards*? You'll see how nice it is! Come up," said he, to the elder. "I will give you a hand."

The little ones urged each other forward. The *gamin* made them afraid and reassured them at the same time, and then it rained very hard. The elder ventured. The younger, seeing his brother go up, and himself left all alone between the paws of this huge beast, had a great desire to cry, but he did not dare.

The elder clambered up the rounds of the ladder. He tottered badly. Gavroche, while he was on his way, encouraged him with the exclamations of a fencing-master to his scholars, or of a muleteer to his mules:

"Don't be afraid!"

"That's it!"

"Come on!"

"Put your foot there!"

"Put your hand here!"

"Be brave!"

And when he came within his reach he caught him quickly and vigorously by the arm and drew him up.

"Gulped!" said he.

The *môme* had passed through the crevice.

"Now," said Gavroche, "wait for me, monsieur; have the kindness to sit down."

And, going out by the crevice, as he had entered, he let himself glide with the agility of a monkey along the elephant's leg; he dropped upon his feet in the grass, caught the little five-year-old by the waist and set him half-way up the ladder; then he began to mount up behind him, crying to the elder: "I will push him; you pull him."

In an instant the little fellow was lifted, pushed, dragged, pulled, stuffed, crammed into the hole, without having had time to know what was going on. And Gavroche, entering after him, pushing back the ladder with a kick, so that it fell upon the grass, began to clap his hands, and cried: "Here we are! Hurrah for General Lafayette!"

This explosion over, he added: "Brats! you are in my house."

Gavroche was, in fact, at home.

Oh, unexpected utility of the useless! charity of great

things! goodness of giants! This monstrous monument, which had contained a thought of the emperor, had become the box of a *gamin*. The *môme* had been accepted and sheltered by the colossus. The bourgeois, in their Sunday clothes, who passed by the elephant of the Bastile, frequently said, eying it scornfully with their goggle eyes: "What's the use of that?" The use of it was to save from the cold, the frost, the hail, the rain; to protect from the wintry wind, to preserve from sleeping in the mud, which breeds fever, and from sleeping in the snow, which breeds death, a little being with no father or mother; with no bread, no clothing, no asylum. The use of it was to receive the innocent, whom society repelled. The use of it was to diminish the public crime. It was a den open for him to whom all doors were closed. It seemed as if the miserable old mastodon, invaded by vermin and oblivion, covered with warts, mould, and ulcers, tottering, worm-eaten, abandoned, condemned; a sort of colossal beggar, asking in vain the alms of a benevolent look, in the middle of the square, had taken pity itself on this other beggar, the poor pigmy who went with no shoes to his feet, no roof over his head, blowing his fingers, clothed in rags, fed upon what is thrown away. This was the use of the elephant of the Bastile. This idea of Napoleon, disdained by men, had been taken up by God. That which had been illustrious only had become august. The emperor must have had, to realize what he meditated, porphyry, brass, iron, gold, marble; for God the old assemblage of boards, joists, and plaster was enough. The emperor had had a dream of genius; in this titanic elephant, armed, prodigious, brandishing his trunk, bearing his tower, and making the joyous and vivifying waters gush out on all sides about him, he desired to incarnate the people. God had done a grander thing with it—He lodged a child.

The hole by which Gavroche had entered was a break hardly visible from the outside, concealed as it was, and, as we have said, under the belly of the elephant, and so narrow that hardly anything but cats and *mômes* could have passed through.

"Let us begin," said Gavroche, "by telling the porter that we are not in."

And plunging into the obscurity with certainty, like one

who is familiar with his room, he took a board and stopped the hole.

Gavroche plunged again into the obscurity. The children heard the spluttering of the taper plunged into the phosphoric bottle. The chemical taper was not yet in existence; the Fumade tinder-box represented progress at that period.

A sudden light made them wink; Gavroche had just lighted one of those bits of string soaked in resin which are called cellar-rats. The cellar-rat, which made more smoke than flame, rendered the inside of the elephant dimly visible.

Gavroche's two guests looked about them and felt something like what one would feel who should be shut up in the great tun of Heidelberg, or better still, what Jonah must have felt in the biblical belly of the whale. An entire and gigantic skeleton appeared to them and enveloped them. Above, a long dusky beam, from which projected at regular distances massive encircling timbers, represented the vertebral column with its ribs, stalactites of plaster hung down like the viscera, and from one side to the other huge spider-webs made dusty diaphragms. Here and there in the corners great blackish spots were seen, which had the appearance of being alive, and which changed their places rapidly with a wild and startled motion.

The débris fallen from the elephant's back upon his belly had filled up the concavity so that they could walk upon it as upon a floor.

The smaller one hugged close to his brother, and said in a low tone: "It is dark."

This word made Gavroche cry out. The petrified air of the two *mômes* rendered a shock necessary.

"What is that you are driving at?" he exclaimed. "Are we humbugging? Are we coming the disgusted? Must you have the Tuileries? Would you be fools? Say, I inform you that I do not belong to the regiment of ninnies. Are you the brats of the Pope's head-waiter?"

A little roughness is good for alarm. It is reassuring. The two children came close to Gavroche.

Gavroche, paternally softened by this confidence, passed

"from the grave to the gentle," and addressing himself to the smaller:

"Goosey," said he to him, accenting the insult with a caressing tone, "it is outside that it is dark! Outside it rains, here it doesn't rain; outside it is cold, here there isn't a speck of wind; outside there are heaps of folks, here there isn't anybody; outside there isn't even a moon, here there is my candle, by jinks!"

The two children began to regard the apartment with less fear; but Gavroche did not allow them much longer leisure for contemplation.

"Quick," said he.

And he pushed them toward what we are very happy to be able to call the bottom of the chamber.

His bed was there.

Gavroche's bed was complete. That is to say, there was a mattress, a covering, and an alcove with curtains.

The mattress was a straw mat, the covering a large blanket of coarse gray wool, very warm and almost new. The alcove was like this:

Three rather long laths, sunk and firmly settled into the rubbish of the floor; that is to say, of the belly of the elephant, two in front and one behind, and tied together by a string at the top, so as to form a pyramidal frame. This frame supported a fine trellis of brass wire which was simply hung over it, but artistically applied and kept in place by fastenings of iron wire, in such a way that it entirely enveloped the three laths. A row of large stones fixed upon the ground all about this trellis so as to let nothing pass. This trellis was nothing more nor less than a fragment of those copper nettings which are used to cover the bird-houses in menageries. Gavroche's bed under this netting was as if in a cage. Altogether it was like an Esquimau tent.

It was this netting which took the place of curtains.

Gavroche removed the stones a little which kept down the netting in front, and the two folds of the trellis which lay one over the other opened.

"*Mômes*, on your hands and knees!" said Gavroche.

He made his guests enter into the cage carefully, then he went in after them, creeping, pulled back the stones and hermetically closed the opening.

They were all three stretched upon the straw.

Small as they were, none of them could have stood up in the alcove. Gavroche still held the cellar-rat in his hand.

"Now," said he, "*pioncez!* I am going to suppress the candelabra."

"Monsieur," inquired the elder of the two brothers of Gavroche, pointing to the netting, "what is that?"

"That," said Gavroche gravely, "is for the rats, *pioncez!*"

However, he felt it incumbent upon him to add a few words for the instruction of those beings of a tender age, and he continued:

"They are things from the Jardin des Plantes. They are used for ferocious animals. Tsaol [it is a whole] magazine full of them. Tsony [it is only] to mount over a wall, climb by a window, and pass under a door. You get as much as you want."

While he was talking he wrapped a fold of the coverlid about the smaller one, who murmured:

"Oh! that is good! it is warm!"

Gavroche looked with satisfaction upon the coverlid.

"That is also from the Jardin des Plantes," said he. "I took that from the monkeys."

And, showing the elder the mat upon which he was lying, a very thick mat and admirably made, he added:

"That was the giraffe's."

After a pause, he continued:

"The beasts had all this. I took it from them. They didn't care. I told them: 'It is for the elephant.'"

He was silent again, and resumed:

"We get over the walls and we make fun of the government. That's all."

The two children looked with a timid and stupefied respect upon this intrepid and inventive being, a vagabond like them, isolated like them, wretched like them, who was something wonderful and all-powerful, who seemed to them supernatural, and whose countenance was made up of all the grimaces of an old mountebank mingled with the most natural and most pleasant smile.

"Monsieur," said the elder timidly, "you are not afraid, then, of the sergents-de-ville?"

Gavroche merely answered:

"*Môme!* we don't say sergents-de-ville; we say *cognes*."

The smaller boy had his eyes open, but he said nothing. As he was on the edge of the mat, the elder being in the middle, Gavroche tucked the coverlid under him as a mother would have done, and raised the mat under his head with some old rags in such a way as to make a pillow for the *môme*. Then he turned toward the elder:

"Eh! we are pretty well off here?"

"Oh, yes," answered the eldest, looking at Gavroche with the expression of a rescued angel.

The two poor little soaked children were beginning to get warm.

"Ah, now," continued Gavroche, "what in the world were you crying for?"

And pointing out the little one to his brother:

"A youngster like that, I don't say; but a big boy like you to cry is silly; it makes you look like a calf."

"Well," said the child, "we had no room—no place to go."

"Brat!" replied Gavroche, "we don't say a room, we say a *piolle*."

"And then we were afraid to be all alone like that in the night."

"We don't say night, we say *sorgue*."

"Thank you, monsieur," said the child.

"Listen to me," continued Gavroche; "you must never whine any more for anything. I will take care of you. You will see what fun we have. In summer we will go to the Glacière with Navet, a comrade of mine; we will go in swimming in the basin; we will run on the track before the bridge of Austerlitz, all naked—that makes the washerwomen mad. They scream, they scold; if you only knew how funny they are. We will go to see the skeleton man. He is alive. At the Champs Elysées. That parishioner is as thin as anything. And then I will take you to the theatre. I will take you to Frederick Lemaître's. I have tickets; I know the actors; I even played once in a piece. We were *mômes*, so high; we ran about under a cloth that made the sea. I will have you engaged at my theatre. We will go and see the savages. They're not real, those savages. They have red tights, which wrinkle, and you

can see their elbows darned with white thread. After that we will go to the opera. We will go in with the *claqueurs*. The *claque* at the opera is very select. I wouldn't go with the *claque* on the boulevards. At the opera, just think, there are some who pay twenty sous, but they are fools. They call them dish-clouts. And then we will go to see the guillotining. I will show you the executioner. He lives in the Rue des Marais. M. Sanson. There is a letter-box on his door. Oh, we have famous fun!"

At this moment a drop of wax fell upon Gavroche's finger and recalled him to the realities of life.

"The deuce!" said he; "there's the match used up. Attention! I can't spend more than a sou a month for my illumination. When we go to bed we must go to sleep. We haven't time to read the romances of M. Paul de Kock. Besides, the light might show through the cracks of the *porte-cochère* and the *cognes* couldn't help seeing."

"And then," timidly observed the elder, who alone dared to talk to Gavroche and reply to him, "a spark might fall into the straw; we must take care not to burn the house up."

"We don't say burn the house," said Gavroche, "we say *riffauder* the *bocard*."

The storm redoubled. They heard, in the intervals of the thunder, the tempest beating against the back of the colossus.

"Pour away, old rain!" said Gavroche. "It does amuse me to hear the decanter emptying along the house's legs. Winter is a fool; he throws away his goods, he loses his trouble, he can't wet us, and it makes him grumble, the old water-porter!"

This allusion to thunder, all the consequences of which Gavroche accepted as a philosopher of the nineteenth century, was followed by a very vivid flash, so blinding that something of it entered by the crevice into the belly of the elephant. Almost at the same instant the thunder burst forth very furiously. The two little boys uttered a cry and rose so quickly that the trellis was almost thrown out of place; but Gavroche turned his bold face toward them, and took advantage of the clap of thunder to burst into a laugh.

"Be calm, children. Don't upset the edifice. That

was fine thunder; give us some more. That wasn't any fool of a flash. Bravo, God! by jinks! that is most as good as it is at the theatre."

This said, he restored order in the trellis, gently pushed the two children to the head of the bed, pressed their knees to stretch them out at full length, and exclaimed:

"As God is lighting his candle, I can blow out mine. Children, we must sleep, my young humans. It is very bad not to sleep. It would make you *schlinguer* in your strainer, or, as the big bugs say, stink in your jaws. Wind yourselves up well in the peel! I'm going to extinguish. Are you all right?"

"Yes," murmured the elder, "I am right. I feel as if I had feathers under my head."

"We don't say head," cried Gavroche, "we say *tronche*."

The two children hugged close to each other. Gavroche finished arranging them upon the mat, and pulled the coverlid up to their ears, then repeated for the third time the injunction in hieratic language:

"*Pioncez!*"

And he blew out the taper.

Hardly was the light extinguished when a singular tremor began to agitate the trellis under which the three children were lying. It was a multitude of dull rubbings, which gave a metallic sound, as if claws and teeth were grinding the copper wire. This was accompanied by all sorts of little sharp cries.

The little boy of five, hearing this tumult over his head, and shivering with fear, pushed the elder brother with his elbow, but the elder brother had already *pioncé*, according to Gavroche's order. Then the little boy, no longer capable of fearing him, ventured to accost Gavroche, but very low, and holding his breath:

"Monsieur?"

"Hey?" said Gavroche, who had just closed his eyes.

"What is that?"

"It is the rats," answered Gavroche.

And he laid his head again upon the mat.

The rats, in fact, which swarmed by thousands in the carcass of the elephant, and which were those living black spots of which we have spoken, had been held in awe by the flame of the candle so long as it burned, but as soon as

this cavern, which was, as it were, their city, had been restored to night, smelling there what the good story-teller Perrault calls "some fresh meat," they had rushed in *en masse* upon Gavroche's tent, climbed to the top, and were biting its meshes as if they were seeking to get through this new-fashioned mosquito bar.

Still the little boy did not go to sleep.

"Monsieur!" he said again.

"Hey?" said Gavroche.

"What are the rats?"

"They are mice."

This explanation reassured the child a little. He had seen some white mice in the course of his life, and he was not afraid of them. However, he raised his voice again:

"Monsieur?"

"Hey?" replied Gavroche.

"Why don't you have a cat?"

"I had one," answered Gavroche, "I brought one here, but they eat her up for me."

This second explanation undid the work of the first, and the little fellow again began to tremble. The dialogue between him and Gavroche was resumed for the fourth time:

"Monsieur!"

"Hey?"

"Who was it that was eaten up?"

"The cat."

"Who was it that eat the cat?"

"The rats."

"The mice?"

"Yes, the rats."

The child, dismayed by these mice who eat cats, continued:

"Monsieur, would those mice eat us?"

"Golly!" said Gavroche.

The child's terror was complete. But Gavroche added:

"Don't be afraid! they can't get in. And then I am here. Here, take hold of my hand. Be still, and *pioncez!*"

Gavroche at the same time took the little fellow's hand across his brother. The child clasped this hand against his body, and felt safe. Courage and strength have such mysterious communications. It was once more silent about

them, the sound of voices had startled and driven away the rats; in a few minutes they might have returned and done their worst in vain, the three *mômes*, plunged in slumber, heard nothing more.

The hours of the night passed away. Darkness covered the immense Place de la Bastille; a wintry wind, which mingled with the rain, blew in gusts; the patrolmen ransacked the doors, alleys, yards, and dark corners, and, looking for nocturnal vagabonds, passed silently by the elephant; the monster, standing motionless, with open eyes in the darkness, appeared to be in reverie and well satisfied with his good deeds, and he sheltered from the heavens and from men the three poor sleeping children.

To understand what follows, we must remember that at that period the guard-house of the Bastille was situated at the other extremity of the square, and that what occurred near the elephant could neither be seen nor heard by the sentinel.

Toward the end of the hour which immediately precedes daybreak, a man turned out of the Rue St. Antoine, running, crossed the square, turned the great inclosure of the Column of July, and glided between the palisades under the belly of the elephant. Had any light whatever shone upon this man, from his thoroughly wet clothing, one would have guessed that he had passed the night in the rain. When under the elephant he raised a grotesque call, which belongs to no human language, and which a parrot alone could reproduce. He twice repeated this call, of which the following orthography gives but a very imperfect idea:

"Kirikikiou!"

At the second call, a clear, cheerful young voice answered from the belly of the elephant:

"Yes!"

Almost immediately the board which closed the hole moved away and gave passage to a child, who descended along the elephant's leg and dropped lightly near the man. It was Gavroche. The man was Montparnasse.

As to this call, *kirikikiou*, it was undoubtedly what the child meant by: "You will ask for M. Gavroche."

On hearing it he had waked with a spring, crawled out of his "alcove," separating the netting a little, which he

afterward carefully closed again, then he had opened the trap and descended.

The man and the child recognized each other silently in the dark; Montparnasse merely said: "We need you. Come and give us a lift."

The *gamin* did not ask any other explanation.

"I'm on hand," said he.

And they both took the direction of the Rue St. Antoine, whence Montparnasse came, winding their way rapidly through the long file of market wagons which go down at that hour toward the market.

The market-gardeners, crouching among the salads and vegetables, half-asleep, buried up to the eyes in the boots of their wagons on account of the driving rain, did not even notice these strange passengers.

III

THE FORTUNES AND MISFORTUNES OF ESCAPE

WHAT had taken place that same night at La Force was this:

An escape had been concerted between Babet, Brujon, Gueulemer, and Thenardier, although Thenardier was in solitary. Babet had done the business for himself during the day, as we have seen from the account of Montparnasse to Gavroche. Montparnasse was to help them from without.

Brujon, having spent a month in a chamber of punishment, had had time, first, to twist a rope; secondly, to perfect a plan. Formerly these stern cells in which the discipline of the prison delivers the condemned to himself were composed of four stone walls, a ceiling of stone, a pavement of tiles, a camp bed, a grated air-hole, a double iron door, and were called "dungeons"; but the dungeon had been thought too horrible; now it is composed of an iron door, a grated air-hole, a camp bed, a pavement of tiles, a ceiling of stone, four stone walls, and it is called "chamber of punishment." There is a little light in them about noon. The inconvenience of these chambers, which, as we see, are not dungeons, is that they allow beings to reflect who should be made to work.

Brujon, then, had reflected, and he had gone out of the chamber of punishment with a rope. As he was reputed very dangerous in the Charlemagne Court, he was put into the Bâtiment Neuf. The first thing which he found in the Bâtiment Neuf was Gueulemer, the second was a nail; Gueulemer, that is to say crime; a nail, that is to say liberty.

Brujon, of whom it is time to give a complete idea, was, with an appearance of a delicate complexion and a profoundly premeditated languor, a polished, gallant, intelligent robber, with an enticing look and an atrocious smile. His look was a result of his will, and his smile of his nature. His first studies in his art were directed toward roofs; he had made a great improvement in the business of the lead strippers who despoil roofings and distraint eaves by the process called "the double fat."

What rendered the moment peculiarly favorable for an attempt at escape was that some workmen were taking off and relaying, at that very time, a part of the slating of the prison. The Cour St. Bernard was not entirely isolated from the Charlemagne Court and the Cour St. Louis. There were scaffoldings and ladders up aloft; in other words, bridges and stairways leading toward deliverance.

Bâtiment Neuf, the most cracked and decrepit affair in the world, was the weak point of the prison. The walls were so much corroded by saltpetre that they had been obliged to put a facing of wood over the arches of the dormitories, because the stones detached themselves and fell upon the beds of the prisoners. Notwithstanding this decay, the blunder was committed of shutting up in the Bâtiment Neuf the most dangerous of the accused, of putting "the hard cases" in there, as they say in prison language.

The Bâtiment Neuf contained four dormitories, one above the other, and an attic which was called the Bel Air. A large chimney, probably of some ancient kitchen of the Dukes de la Force, started from the ground floor, passed through the four stories, cutting in two all the dormitories in which it appeared to be a kind of flattened pillar, and went out through the roof.

Gueulemer and Brujon were in the same dormitory. They had been put into the lower story by precaution. It

happened that the heads of their beds rested against the flue of the chimney.

Thenardier was exactly above them in the attic known as the *Bel Air*.

The passer who stops in the Rue Culture St. Catherine, beyond the barracks of the firemen, in front of the *portecochère* of the bath-house, sees a yard full of flowers and shrubs, in boxes, at the further end of which is a little white rotunda with two wings enlivened by green blinds, the bucolic dream of Jean Jacques. Not more than ten years ago above this rotunda there arose a black wall, enormous, hideous, and bare, against which it was built. This was the encircling wall of *La Force*.

This wall behind this rotunda was Milton seen behind Berquin.

High as it was this wall was overtopped by a still blacker roof, which could be seen behind. This was the roof of the *Bâtiment Neuf*. You noticed in it four dormer windows with gratings; these were the windows of the *Bel Air*. A chimney pierced the roof, the chimney which passed through the dormitories.

The *Bel Air*, this attic of the *Bâtiment Neuf*, was a kind of large garret hall, closed with triple gratings and double sheet-iron doors studded with monstrous nails. Entering at the north end, you had on your left the four windows, and on your right, opposite the windows, four large square cages, with spaces between, separated by narrow passages, built breast-high of masonry, with bars of iron to the roof.

Thenardier had been in solitary in one of these cages since the night of the 3d of February. Nobody has ever discovered how, or by what contrivance, he had succeeded in procuring and hiding a bottle of that wine invented, it is said, by Desrues, with which a narcotic is mixed, and which the band of the "*Endormeurs*" has rendered celebrated.

There are in many prisons treacherous employees, half-jailers and half-thieves, who aid in escapes, who sell a faithless service to the police, and who make much more than their salary.

On this same night, then, on which little Gavroche had picked up the two wandering children, Brujon and Gueu-

lemer, knowing that Babet, who had escaped that very morning, was waiting for them in the street as well as Montparnasse, got up softly and began to pierce the flue of the chimney, which touched their beds, with the nail which Brujon had found. The fragments fell upon Brujon's bed, so that nobody heard them. The hailstorm and the thunder shook the doors upon their hinges, and made a frightful and convenient uproar in the prison. Those of the prisoners who awoke made a feint of going to sleep again, and let Gueulemer and Brujon alone. Brujon was adroit; Gueulemer was vigorous. Before any sound had reached the watchman who was lying in the grated cell with a window opening into the sleeping-room, the wall was pierced, the chimney scaled, the iron trellis which closed the upper orifice of the flue forced, and the two formidable bandits were upon the roof. The rain and the wind redoubled, the roof was slippery.

"What a good *sorgue* for a *crampe*,"* said Brujon.

A gulf six feet wide and eighty feet deep separated them from the encircling wall. At the bottom of this gulf they saw a sentinel's musket gleaming in the obscurity. They fastened one end of the rope which Brujon had woven in his cell to the stumps of the bars of the chimney which they had just twisted off, threw the other end over the encircling wall, cleared the gulf at a bound, clung to the coping of the wall, bestrode it, let themselves glide one after the other down along the rope upon a little roof which adjoined the bath-house, pulled down their rope, leaped into the bath-house yard, crossed it, pushed open the porter's slide, near which hung the cord, pulled the cord, opened the *porte-cochère*, and were in the street.

It was not three-quarters of an hour since they had risen to their feet on their beds in the darkness, their nail in hand, their project in their heads.

A few moments afterward they had rejoined Babet and Montparnasse, who were prowling about the neighborhood.

In drawing down their rope, they had broken it, and there was a piece remaining fastened to the chimney on

* What a good night for an escape.

the roof. They had received no other damage than having pretty thoroughly skinned their hands.

That night Thenardier had received a warning, it never could be ascertained in what manner, and did not go to sleep.

About one o'clock in the morning, the night being very dark, he saw two shadows passing on the roof, in the rain and in the raging wind, before the window opposite his cage. One stopped at the window long enough for a look. It was Brujon. Thenardier recognized him and understood. That was enough for him. Thenardier, described as an assassin and detained under the charge of lying in wait by night with force and arms, was kept constantly in sight. A sentinel, who was relieved every two hours, marched with loaded gun before his cage. The *Bel Air* was lighted by a reflector. The prisoner had irons on his feet weighing fifty pounds. Every day, at four o'clock in the afternoon, a warden, escorted by two dogs—this was customary at that period—entered his cage, laid down near his bed a two-pound loaf of black bread, a jug of water, and a dish full of very thin soup, in which a few beans were swimming, examined his irons and struck upon the bars. This man, with his dogs, returned twice in the night.

Thenardier had obtained permission to keep a kind of an iron spike, which he used to nail his bread into a crack in the wall, "in order," said he, "to preserve it from the rats." As Thenardier was constantly in sight they imagined no danger from this spike. However, it was remembered afterward that a warden had said: "It would be better to let him have nothing but a wooden spike."

At two o'clock in the morning the sentinel, who was an old soldier, was relieved and his place was taken by a conscript. A few moments afterward the man with the dogs made his visit and went away without noticing anything except the extreme youth and the "peasant air" of the "greenhorn." Two hours afterward, at four o'clock, when they came to relieve the conscript, they found him asleep and lying on the ground like a log near Thenardier's cage. As to Thenardier, he was not there. His broken irons were on the floor. There was a hole in the ceiling of his cage, and another hole in the roof. A board had been torn

from his bed and doubtless carried away, for it was not found again. There was also seized in the cell a half-empty bottle containing the rest of the drugged wine with which the soldier had been put to sleep. The soldier's bayonet had disappeared.

At the moment of this discovery it was supposed that Thenardier was out of all reach. The reality is that he was no longer in the Bâtiment Neuf, but that he was still in great danger.

Thenardier, on reaching the roof of the Bâtiment Neuf, found the remnant of Brujon's cord hanging to the bars of the upper trap of the chimney, but this broken end being much too short, he was unable to escape over the sentry's path as Brujon and Gueulemer had done.

On turning from the Rue des Ballets into the Rue du Roi de Sicile, on the right you meet almost immediately with a dirty recess. There was a house there in the last century, of which only the rear wall remains, a genuine ruin wall which rises to the height of the third story among the neighboring dwellings. This ruin can be recognized by two large square windows, which may still be seen; the one in the middle, nearer the right gable, is crossed by a worm-eaten joist fitted like a sap-piece for a shore. Through these windows could formerly be discerned a high and dismal wall, which was a part of the encircling wall of La Force.

The void which the demolished house has left upon the street is half-filled by a palisade fence of rotten boards, supported by five stone posts. Hidden in this inclosure is a little shanty built against that part of the ruin which remains standing. The fence has a gate which a few years ago was fastened only by a latch.

Thenardier was upon the crest of this ruin a little after three o'clock in the morning.

How had he got there? That is what nobody has ever been able to explain or understand. The lightning must have both confused and helped him. Did he use the ladders and the scaffoldings of the slaters to get from roof to roof, from inclosure to inclosure, from compartment to compartment, to the buildings of the Charlemagne Court, then the buildings of the Court St. Louis, the encircling wall, and from thence to the ruin on the Rue du Roi de

Sicile? But there were gaps in this route which seemed to render it impossible. Did he lay down the plank from his bed as a bridge from the roof of the *Bel Air* to the encircling wall, and did he crawl on his belly along the coping of the wall all round the prison as far as the ruin? But the encircling wall of *La Force* followed an indented and uneven line; it rose and fell; it sank down to the barracks of the firemen; it rose up to the bathing-house; it was cut by buildings; it was not of the same height on the *Hôtel Lamoignon* as on the *Rue Pavée*; it had slopes and right angles everywhere; and, then, the sentinels would have seen the dark outline of the fugitive; on this supposition, again, the route taken by *Thenardier* is still almost inexplicable. By either way, an impossible flight. Had *Thenardier*, illuminated by that fearful thirst for liberty which changes precipices into ditches, iron gratings into osier screens, a cripple into an athlete, an old gouty into a bird, stupidity into instinct, instinct into intelligence, and intelligence into genius, had *Thenardier* invented and extemporized a third method? It has never been known.

One can not always comprehend the marvels of escape. The man who escapes, let us repeat, is inspired; there is something of the star and the lightning in the mysterious gleam of flight; the effort toward deliverance is not less surprising than the flight toward the sublime; and we say of an escaped robber: "How did he manage to scale that roof?" just as it is said of *Corneille*: "Where did he learn that he would die?"

However this may be, dripping with sweat, soaked through by the rain, his clothes in strips, his hands skinned, his elbows bleeding, his knees torn, *Thenardier* had reached what children in their figurative language call the edge of the wall of ruin; he had stretched himself on it at full length, and there his strength failed him. A steep escarpment, three stories high, separated him from the pavement to the street.

The rope which he had was too short.

He was waiting there, pale, exhausted, having lost all the hope which he had had, still covered by night, but saying to himself that day was just about to dawn, dismayed at the idea of hearing in a few moments the neighboring clock of *St. Paul's* strike four, the hour when they would

come to relieve the sentinel and would find him asleep under the broken roof, gazing with a kind of stupor through the fearful depth, by the glimmer of the lamps, upon the wet and black pavement—that longed-for yet terrible pavement which was death, yet which was liberty.

He asked himself if his three accomplices in escape had succeeded, if they had heard him, and if they would come to his aid. He listened. Except a patrolman, nobody had passed through the street since he had been there. Nearly all the travel of the gardeners of Montrouil, Charonne, Vincennes, and Bercy to the market is through the Rue St. Antoine.

The clock struck four. Thenardier shuddered. A few moments afterward that wild and confused noise which follows upon the discovery of an escape broke out in the prison. The sound of doors opening and shutting, the grinding of gratings upon their hinges, the tumult in the guard-house, the harsh calls of the gate-keepers, the sound of the butts of muskets upon the pavement of the yards reached him. Lights moved up and down in the grated windows of the dormitories, a torch ran along the attic of the Bâtiment Neuf—the firemen of the barracks alongside had been called. Their caps, which the torches lighted up in the rain, were going to and fro along the roofs. At the same time Thenardier saw in the direction of the Bastille a whitish cloud throwing a dismal pallor over the lower part of the sky.

He was on the top of a wall ten inches wide, stretched out beneath the storm, with two precipices, at the right and at the left, unable to stir, giddy at the prospect of falling, and horror-stricken at the certainty of arrest, and his thoughts, like the pendulum of a clock, went from one of these ideas to the other: “Dead if I fall, taken if I stay.”

In this anguish he suddenly saw—the street being still wrapped in obscurity—a man who was gliding along the walls, and who came from the direction of the Rue Pavée, stop in the recess above which Thenardier was, as it were, suspended. This man was joined by a second, who was walking with the same precaution, then by a third, then by a fourth. When these men were together one of them

lifted the latch of the gate in the fence, and they all four entered the inclosure of the shanty. They were exactly under Thenardier. These men had evidently selected this recess so as to be able to talk without being seen by the passers or by the sentinel who guards the gate of La Force a few steps off. It must also be stated that the rain kept this sentinel blockaded in his sentry-box. Thenardier, not being able to distinguish their faces, listened to their words with the desperate attention of a wretch who feels that he is lost.

Something which resembled hope passed before Thenardier's eyes; these men spoke argot.

The first word, in a low voice, but distinctly:

"*Decarrons*. What is it we *maquil lons icigo*?" *

The second answered:

"*Il lansquine* enough to put out the *riffe* of the *ra-bouin*. And then the *coqueurs* are going by, there is a *grivier* there who carries a *gaffe*; shall we let them *emballer us icicaille*?" †

These two words, *icigo* and *icicaille*, which both mean *ici* (here), and which belong, the first to the argot of the Barrières, the second to the argot of the Temple, were revelations to Thenardier. By *icigo* he recognized Brujon, who was a prowler of the Barrières, and by *icicaille* Babet, who, among all his other trades, had been a second-hand dealer at the Temple.

The ancient argot of the age of Louis XIV is now spoken only at the Temple, and Babet was the only one who spoke it quite purely. Without *icicaille* Thenardier would not have recognized him, for he had entirely disguised his voice.

Meanwhile the third had put in a word:

"Nothing is urgent yet; let us wait a little. How do we know that he doesn't need our help?"

By this, which was only French, Thenardier recognized Montparnasse, whose elegance consisted in understanding all argots and speaking none.

* Let us go; what are we doing here?

† It rains enough to put out the devil's fire. And then the police are going by. There is a soldier there who is standing sentinel. Shall we let them arrest us here?

As to the fourth, he was silent, but his huge shoulders betrayed him. Thenardier had no hesitation. It was Gueulemer.

Brujon replied almost impetuously, but still in a low voice:

"What is it you *bonnez* us there? The *tapissier* couldn't draw his *crampe*. He don't know the *truc*, indeed! *Bouliner* his *limace* and *faucher* his *empaffes*, *maquiller* a *tortouse* *caler* *boulins* in the *lourdes*, *braser* the *faffes* *maquiller* *caroubles*, *faucher* the Bards, balance his *tortouse* outside *planquer* himself, *camoufler* himself, one must be a *mariol*? The old man couldn't do it; he don't know how to *goupiner*." *

Babet added, still in that prudent, classic argot which was spoken by Poulailleur and Cartouche, and which is to the bold, new, strongly colored and hazardous argot, which Brujon used, what the language of Racine is to the language of André Chénier:

"Your *orgue tapissier* must have been made *marron* on the stairs. One must be *arcasien*. He is a *gallifard*. He has been played the *harnache* by a *roussin*, perhaps even by a *roussi* who has beaten him *comtois*. Lend your *oche*, Montparnasse, do you hear those *criblements* in the *college*? You have seen all those *camouffles*. He has *tombée*, come! He must be left to draw his twenty *longes*. I have no *taf*, I am no *taffeur*, that is *colombé*, but there is nothing more but to make the *lezards*, or otherwise they will make us *gambiller* for it. Don't *renauder*, come with *nousiergue*. Let us go and *picter* a *rouillarde encible*." †

* What is it you tell us there? The innkeeper couldn't escape. He don't know the trade, indeed! To tear up his shirt and cut up his bedclothes to make a rope, to make holes in the doors, to forge false papers, to make false keys, to cut his irons, to hang his rope outside, to hide himself, to disguise himself, one must be a devil! The old man couldn't do it, he don't know how to work.

† Your innkeeper must have been caught in the act. One must be a devil. He is an apprentice. He has been duped by a spy, perhaps even by a sheep, who made him his gossip. Listen, Montparnasse, do you hear those cries in the prison? You have seen all those lights. He is retaken, come! He must be left to get his twenty years. I have no fear, I am no coward, that is known, but there is nothing more to be done, or otherwise they will make us dance. Don't be angry, come with us. Let us go and drink a bottle of old wine together.

"Friends are not left in difficulty," muttered Montparnasse.

"I *bonnis* you that he is *malade*," replied Brujon. "At the hour which *toque*, the *tapissier* isn't worth a *broque*! We can do nothing here. *Décarrons*. I expect every moment that a *cogne* will *cintrer* me in *bogne*!" *

Montparnasse resisted now but feebly; the truth is that these four men, with that faithfulness which bandits exhibit in never abandoning each other, had been prowling all night about La Force at whatever risk, in hope of seeing Thenardier rise above some wall. But the night which was becoming really too fine—it was storming enough to keep all the streets empty—the cold which was growing upon them, their soaked clothing, their wet shoes, the alarming uproar which had just broken out in the prison, the passing hours, the patrolmen they had met, hope departing, fear returning, all this impelled them to retreat. Montparnasse himself, who was, perhaps, to some slight extent a son-in-law of Thenardier, yielded. A moment more, they were gone. Thenardier gasped upon his wall like the shipwrecked sailors of the *Meduse* on their raft when they saw the ship which had appeared vanish in the horizon.

He dared not call them, a cry overheard might destroy all; he had an idea, a final one, a flash of light; he took from his pocket the end of Brujon's rope which he had detached from the chimney of the *Bâtiment Neuf* and threw it into the inclosure.

This rope fell at their feet.

"A widow!" † said Babet.

"My *tortouse*!" ‡ said Brujon.

"There is the innkeeper," said Montparnasse.

They raised their eyes. Thenardier advanced his head a little.

"Quick!" said Montparnasse, "have you the other end of the rope, Brujon?"

"Yes."

"Tie the two ends together, we will throw him the

* I tell you that he is retaken. At the present time, the innkeeper isn't worth a penny. We can do nothing here. Let us go. I expect every moment that a *sergent de ville* will have me in his hand.

† A rope (argot of the Temple). ‡ My rope (argot of the Barrières)

rope, he will fasten it to the wall, he will have enough to get down."

Thenardier ventured to speak:

"I am benumbed."

"We will warm you."

"I can't stir."

"Let yourself slip down, we will catch you."

"My hands are stiff."

"Only tie the rope to the wall."

"I can't."

"One of us must get up," said Montparnasse.

"Three stories!" said Brujon.

An old plaster flue, which had served for a stove that had formerly been in use in the shanty, crept along the wall, rising almost to the spot at which they saw Thenardier. This small flue, then very much cracked and full of seams, has since fallen, but its traces can still be seen.

"We could get up by that," said Montparnasse.

"By that flue!" exclaimed Babet; "an *orgue*,* never! It would take a *mion*." †

"It would take a *môme*," ‡ added Brujon.

"Where can we find a brat?" said Gueulemer

"Wait," said Montparnasse. "I have the thing."

He opened the gate of the fence softly, made sure that nobody was passing in the street, went out carefully, shut the door after him and started on a run in the direction of the Bastile.

Seven or eight minutes elapsed, 8,000 centuries to Thenardier; Babet, Brujon, and Gueulemer kept their teeth clinched; the door at last opened again and Montparnasse appeared, out of breath, with Gavroche. The rain still kept the street entirely empty.

Little Gavroche entered the inclosure and looked upon these bandit forms with a quiet air. The water was dripping from his hair. Gueulemer addressed him:

"Brat, are you a man?"

Gavroche shrugged his shoulders and answered:

"A *môme* like *mézig* is an *orgue*, and *orgues* like *vous-sailles* are *mômes*." §

* A man.

† A child (argot of the Temple).

‡ A child (argot of the Barrières).

§ A child like me is a man, and men like you are children.

"How the *mion* plays with the spittoon!" * exclaimed Babet.

"The *môme pantinois* isn't *maquillé* of *fertille lansquinée*," added Brujon.

"What is it you want?" said Gavroche.

Montparnasse answered:

"To climb up by this flue."

"With this widow," ‡ said Babet.

"And *ligoter* the *tortouse*," § continued Brujon.

"To the *monté* of the *montant*," || resumed Babet.

"To the *pieu* of the *vanterne*," ¶ added Brujon.

"And then?" said Gavroche.

"That's all!" said Gueulemer.

The *gamin* examined the rope, the flue, the wall, the windows, and made that inexpressible and disdainful sound with the lips which signifies:

"What's that?"

"There is a man up there whom you will save," replied Montparnasse.

"Will you?" added Brujon.

"Goosey!" answered the child, as if the question appeared to him absurd; and he proceeded to take off his shoes.

Gueulemer caught up Gavroche with one hand, put him on the roof of the shanty, the worm-eaten boards of which bent beneath the child's weight, and handed him the rope which Brujon had tied together during the absence of Montparnasse. The *gamin* went toward the flue, which it was easy to enter, thanks to a large hole at the roof. Just as he was about to start, Thenardier, who saw safety and life approaching, bent over the edge of the wall; the first gleam of day lighted up his forehead reeking with sweat, his livid cheeks, his thin and savage nose, his gray, bristly beard, and Gavroche recognized him:

"Hold on!" said he, "it is my father—well, that don't hinder!"

And taking the rope in his teeth he resolutely commenced the ascent.

* How well the child's tongue is hung.

† The Parisian child isn't made of wet straw.

‡ This rope.

|| To the top of the wall.

§ Fasten the rope.

¶ To the cross-bar of the window.

He reached the top of the ruin, bestrode the old wall like a horse, and tied the rope firmly to the upper cross-bar of the window.

A moment afterward Thenardier was in the street.

As soon as he had touched the pavement, as soon as he felt himself out of danger, he was no longer fatigued, benumbed, or trembling; the terrible things through which he had passed vanished like a whiff of smoke; all that strange and ferocious intellect awoke and found itself erect and free, ready to march forward. The man's first words were these:

"Now, who are we going to eat?"

It is needless to explain the meaning of this frightfully transparent word, which signifies all at once to kill, to assassinate, and to plunder. "Eat," real meaning: "devour."

"Let us hide first," said Brujon. "Finish in three words and we will separate immediately. There was an affair which had a good look in the Rue Plumet, a deserted street, an isolated house, an old rusty grating upon a garden, some lone women."

"Well, why not?" inquired Thenardier.

"Your *fée* * Eponine has been to see the thing," answered Babet.

"And she brought a biscuit to Magnon," added Gueulemer, "nothing to *maquiller* there."†

"The *fée* isn't *loffe*," ‡ said Thenardier. "Still, we must see."

"Yes, yes," said Brujon, "we must see."

Meantime none of these men appeared longer to see Gavroche, who, during this colloquy, had seated himself upon one of the stone supports of the fence; he waited a few minutes, perhaps for his father to turn toward him, then he put on his shoes, and said:

"It is over; you have no more use for me. Men, you are out of your trouble. I am going. I must go and get my *mômes* up."

And he went away.

The five men went out of the inclosure one after another.

* Your daughter.

† Nothing to do there.

‡ Stupid.

When Gavroche had disappeared at the turn of the Rue des Ballets Babet took Thenardier aside.

"Did you notice that *mion*?" he asked him.

"What *mion*?"

"The *mion* who climbed up the wall and brought you the rope."

"Not much."

"Well, I don't know, but it seems to me that he is your son."

"Pshaw!" said Thenardier, "do you think so?"



